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ABSTRACT

The problems and rewards of early second-generation Japanese in Hawaii are presented in this novel about a young teenager caught in the middle of the cultural conflict of her generation. Stressing the multinational heritage of Hawaii's people, the book contributes a knowledge and understanding of what the Japanese heritage contributed to the culture of modern Hawaii. Although cultural differences exist, the young girl is able to find a balance in her world by accepting her own American training and her parents' adherence to the customs of Japan. (Author/JR)

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SACHIE

A Daughter of Hawaii

SP 010 586

Patsy Sumie Saiki

Illustrations by Norman Nagai

All of the characters in this book are fictitious, and any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, is purely coincidental.

This book is dedicated to Keith, Ken, Kris, Kelli, Arnie, Kathi, and Lauri with the hope that they appreciate and preserve their heritage.

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ABOUT THE BOOK

In a period of Hawaii's history when we have come to recognize and respect the multi-national heritage of our people, the book SACHIE, A DAUGHTER of HAWAII, is a truly warm and delightful way to gain deeper knowledge and understanding of what the Japanese heritage contributed to the culture of modern Hawaii — a unique blend of Asian, American, and Hawaiian influences.

When I began reading SACHIE, I couldn't put the book down. The story flowed, and I found myself anxiously wanting to tiptoe through the life of this young girl who viewed the tiny world of Kakela through eyes colored by people and events of a culture transposed to a strange land. The moments of happiness, sadness, and confusion brought laughter and tears to my eyes, but when I finished the book, I saw the beautiful metamorphosis of a Japanese-American girl who can proudly represent Hawaii today. Sachie has the spirit of the "golden people" of Hawaii

s/Elaine Takenaka
Social Studies Program Specialist
Hawaii State Department of Education

Here is a faithful portrayal of the early second-generation Japanese in Hawaii. Its portrayal, intentionally or otherwise, draws similarities to all new arrivals in America, with their struggles and their successes, their pain and their happiness. Saiki has made this account, however, a distinctly unique one through her Sachie, as this young teenager comes to terms in her acceptance and her rationalization of her own American training and her parents' adherence to the customs of Japan. Everyday customs are delightfully charming . . .

s/Shizuko Ouchi
Former Language Arts Program Specialist
Hawaii State Department of Education

PREFACE

Growing up in an environment composed of two or more cultures is an enriching, rewarding experience, for one can compare different ways of seeing and doing.

Why do we do things this way? Why do my parents act the way they do? What are their beliefs? What are my beliefs? Why? What is important to other people? What can I do to be like people I admire?

Sachie, A Daughter of Hawaii, is a book about a girl who asks herself these questions. Sometimes she challenges her parents' ways. At other times she accepts their beliefs, superstitions and taboos with tolerance and understanding, instead of with skepticism and ridicule.

In the book she is half-child, half-adult; half-Japanese, half-American; half-naive, half-aware; half-submissive, half-questioning. As she peeks into and tiptoes from childhood to adulthood, she is anxious yet reluctant to enter a world where she cannot rely on age-old, fully accepted traditions her parents have depended on. Hers will have to be a new and different life, a mixture of her American-Hawaiian environment and her Japanese heritage.

Sachie is saved from youthful rebellion and alienation because when her parents share their past with her, she listens. She learns bit by bit about their suffering and hardships, their dreams and hopes, their fears of superstitions they don't really believe in but dare not ignore.

Where in the past she had felt ashamed of her parents, she begins to realize with growing awareness that her parents, products of a culture transplanted in new soil and who have had to fight simply to remain alive, are people to be respected. Their ways, their customs, may differ, but their values are to be honored. As awareness grows, so does understanding.

This book is dedicated to all immigrant parents who sought a new land for a better life for themselves and their children, and who tried to preserve the best in their heritage as a gift to coming generations. For this gift, their children are grateful.

Patsy Sumie Saiki
July 7, 1977

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CHAPTER 1

SEPTEMBER: NOT WANTED, SUGAR PLANTATION WHITE MAN

"Why do we have to speak respectfully to people we don't respect? That's dishonesty."

"I don't wanna be a nobody like Father and Mother! I wanna be a somebody, and I can't be a somebody stuck on a farm like this!"

"Sachie!"

"Don't 'Sachie' me. You've been 'Sachie-ing' me all my life. I'm asking you a question, Toki and Haruo. Are you gonna be a somebody some day? When father won't let you be one? And us being yes-yes Japanese? Damn! Damn-damn-damn!" She burst into angry tears.

The whole family stared in shocked disbelief. Was this their gentle, mischievous Sachie?

The day hadn't been any different from others until Sachie came home from school. She was perched up high on a loquat tree. She picked the most golden of the ripe yellow fruit, peeled it, popped it into her mouth, curled her tongue, and spit the twin brown seeds as far into the distance as she could.

"Hey, World, wanna hear a secret? Jerry Higa likes me." She blew more seeds. Let the good news spread!

"Hey, World, and another thing, I think I like him more than he likes me, but that's OK." She blew the seeds up into the air.

"But don't tell my mother because she's prejudiced, even though she likes the Higa family so much."

She busied herself in eating. She was hungry, for she had just returned from school and supper was still two hours away. She was supposed to be pulling weeds in the vegetable garden, but she had sneaked off past the coffee bushes and to the line of loquat trees.

Perched high on a branch, she suddenly heard an alien sound in the afternoon stillness.

"Clop-clopclop-clop." She listened carefully. "Clop-clop-clop-clop." Definitely it was a man riding a horse, not a weary farmer leading a tired horse home after peddling his vegetables in town. The beat of the hooves on the road was too light, too fast.

She hastily climbed down the tree, not only because it was tomboyish for a girl to climb a tree, but because she wasn't supposed to be there. Then, curious as to who would be riding a horse at this time of day in Kakela, she hid in the coffee bushes.

She was surprised to see Mr. Bachman from Fraserville, the town four miles away where the Kakela children went to school and the parents did their shopping. Mr. Bachman was not the plantation boss who lived in a two-story white house on a hill; Mr. Bachman was number five or six — a **luna**, or supervisor, who could make the plantation workers miserable, but who had to take orders from other white men. Sachie wondered where he was headed.

To her shock, he turned his horse into the Himeno road, which wound up a hill for about a hundred yards.

This was when Sachie ran, ran through the coffee bushes, ran through the garden, and dashed into the kitchen. A plantation white man had finally come to the Himeno home.

Her parents had often warned her, "Keep away from plantation white men. If they ask nosy questions, pretend you don't understand

and move away slowly. They can be dangerous."

"Watch out! White man coming! Bakka-man!" she panted.

Hanako, her older sister, was washing dishes at the sink. She turned off the faucet, unhooked two raincoats hung on the kitchen door, and disappeared into the coffee bushes surrounding the house. Sachie stepped into her place and continued washing the dishes.

Her father had been about to drink a cup of tea. He too slipped out, quickly and smoothly despite his 70 years. Sachie's mother moved into his chair.

"**Abunai** — danger! White man!" she called to Toki and Haruo, who were sorting potatoes in the garage. Toki wiped his hands, got a rifle hidden up on a shelf, and pretended to clean it. Haruo took out his pocket knife, moved to a stump in the yard, and aimed the knife from six feet to a marked spot. The blade sank into the exact center.

All this had taken perhaps a minute, maybe even less. It took another minute before a white man rode up the road to the Himeno home.

Bachman got off his horse and headed directly for the kitchen." "Hello," he did say to Toki and Haruo. Evidently what he had to say did not concern them.

"Hi," they answered. "Anything we can do for you?"

"No, I want to talk to your parents." Bachman knew that in Japanese families, the parents made the decisions. He walked to the kitchen door and peeked in. "Hello, Mama-san."

"No spik Engalish," Sachie's mother answered, sipping her tea and looking at him innocently.

"**Konbanwa** — good evening," Bachman tried again.

"No spik Engalish," her mother repeated.

"Hey, **konbanwa** is Japanese," Bachman said. He glanced around the kitchen, and tried to peer into the living room.

"Anybody else home?" he asked. There was silence, except for the occasional sound of water from the faucet. Finally Bachman said, "Listen, you farmers need cash. I can help. My wife's not too strong, and she needs help with the laundry, the cooking, the housecleaning. You have a daughter whom I'm willing to hire. We pay $15 a month, with room and food provided. That's good pay, in this Depression. And she'll have lots of time for studying."

"No spik Engalish," her mother said.

Frustrated, Bachman turned to Toki and Haruo. "Hey, boys, I need help. Where's your father? I'd rather talk to him. And I don't see your sister around. How about calling her and letting me talk to her."

In answer, Haruo stepped back to eight feet of the stump, aimed his knife, and the blade went sailing into the marked spot again. Startled, Bachman said, "That's some aim, my boy."

"Yeh, I can do that ten times out of ten," Haruo answered.

"Want to see me shoot?" Toki took his rifle and aimed at a tin can some distance away. The "clang" of the can made Bachman nervous.

"Listen, I have to be starting back soon. Explain to your mother about my wanting to hire your sister."

"We don't need to have my sister work while she's going to school. We had a pretty good crop this year. Of course we don't have much cash, but then nobody has, in this Depression. By the way, as soon as my sister finishes tenth grade, she'll be getting married."

"But think of the money she can earn until she marries. Explain to your mother, at least."

Toki entered the kitchen and told his mother, "He's asking for Hanako. To work as a maid at his home."

"I thought so. What happened to Mieko, his last maid? Did she get pregnant too, like the other ones? Listen, so he won't make trouble for us, tell him we can't spare Hanako because we need her on the farm, but he can hire Sachie, our other daughter, who is a hard worker. Talk respectfully, Toki."

Sachie, still washing the clean dishes, could hardly believe her ears. When Toki explained, Bachman said, "Who's Sachie?" Toki pointed to Sachie, and Bachman looked at her stiff black ponytails, her slanted eyes, her bony body which her mother called a broomstick, and her skinny legs with big feet. He shook his head.

"She's too young. She couldn't do the laundry or cook. Where's your father? I want to talk with him."

"We said our sister can't go to work. She's needed on this farm."

"I want to hear that from your father. Or your sister. After all, we can give her a lot of advantages. I've never had a girl turn down the job before."

In answer, Toki and Haruo went to Bachman's horse and began stroking her. Seeing this, Bachman rushed outside. "Boys, boys, my horse's very temperamental. She doesn't like anyone but me touching her."

"You like this horse a lot, don't you?"

"Of course I do."

"That's how we feel about our sister. We want to make sure she never has to do anything against her will, especially if she happens to

be in Fraserville alone."

"I don't see how any harm can come to a girl in Fraserville. We have two policemen."

"There's all kinds of harm," Toki explained. "We've told the young men around here that if they ever fooled around with Hanako . . . you should see how they treat her with respect. Hanako can take care of herself, but she's so pretty . . ."

Bachman glanced around the yard and veranda one more time, then said, "Well, if I can't change your minds about having your sister work for me, I'll be off, before it gets dark. I just thought I'd give her a chance. Didn't realize you'd be ungrateful . . . and not accept this opportunity." He rode off in a cloud of dust.

There was silence for a minute, then they all exploded in laughter. But Sachie was angry. "Mother, why did you tell Toki to speak respectfully to Bakka-man when you don't respect him? Why do we have to pretend? We're hypocrites, that's what."

"But he's the one being fooled by us, not us by him," Toki said.

"Maybe he's letting you think you fooled him. And why do we show respect if we don't feel respect? That's dishonesty."

"No, that's just getting along in a hard world, Sachie. You can't always show your true feelings to others. You should know that by now."

"Getting your rifle and knife out. You looked like gangsters. You had to use weapons; words weren't enough," Sachie said scornfully.

"When you're the underdog, you have to scare others off, Sachie, so they don't bother you. Saves time and trouble. You know the saying 'An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.' "

"How corny. And another thing . . . Mother, how could you say I could work for him? You protect Hanako, but not me."

Her mother stopped what she was doing. "Sachie, that's not so. In a few more years, you'll be a beautiful girl. Not face beautiful, but spirit beautiful. A man like Bakka-man would never be able to see the kind of beauty you have. You'd be safe from him. And our offering you and his being able to turn you down made him save face. He has pride too, you know . . . Now go and call your father and Hanako."

Sachie walked past the coffee bushes into the **lehua** forest. Her sister and father were in the cave in which they made their charcoal, the raincoats wrapped around them to protect them from mosquitoes. They walked home silently, except for once when her father said, "I wish I could keep you a girl for a few more years, Hanako. But you're

turning into such a pretty girl, we may have to marry you off soon." Five minutes later he added, "Unless my friend in Hilo lets you go to school from his house. Hilo is a less dangerous place than plantation towns for pretty girls."

Sachie was proud she had been able to warn her parents and brothers. She thought of herself as a heroine, and waited to be praised. But that night, during supper, her father said, "And what were you doing up in a loquat tree when you were supposed to be pulling weeds in the garden? Do you call that responsibility? Aren't you responsible for keeping the garden free of weeds? How old are you . . . thirteen? You're almost an adult, aren't you?"

"I can't win," Sachie muttered. Here she had expected appreciation and praise, and instead she was being scolded. She was angry, but something in the way her parents, her brothers and sister acted made her realize these were only words. But if they felt grateful, why didn't they show it or say so? To play the game, she said, "I'm sorry." They all laughed, and Haruo said, "I'm glad you did what you did, Sachie."

Encouraged, Sachie said, "Father, how come you're afraid of white men from the plantation? You're not afraid of other **haoles.** I don't understand."

"Wait until you're older, and I'll explain . . ."

"Gee, it's always 'Wait until you're older . . .' and then you tell me I'm almost an adult. I'm 13. You said I must learn to be responsible for my actions. If I'm to be an adult, I need to know what adults know."

Her father chewed on his pickled turnip, then said, "You have a point there. I haven't been sharing my past life with you chidlren, trying to protect you. Well, wait till after supper, then."

That night, after the dishes were done, the whole family gathered on the veranda. The moon bathed the house and garden and for miles around in its silver, so the lamp was left in the kitchen.

"This happened many years ago when I first came to Hawaii," her father began.

"What's many years ago? When did you come to Hawaii?"

"In 1895. Thirty-seven years ago. Your mother came in 1899. What I'm talking about happened in 1898. I was working on a plantation then."

"Which plantation?"

"Doesn't matter. They were all the same. But ours was at Pukanui,

near Hilo. Three of us from Hiroshima signed up to come to Hawaii. We saw a bulletin posted on a pole back home, asking for workers from Hiroshima for plantation work. Alone, none of us would have come. Together, we felt safe and signed up."

"How come you didn't bring Mother?"

"Well, we didn't really know what kind of place Hawaii was, and I didn't want your mother to come until I found out. Besides, I thought I might work for about three to six years, then return to Japan to buy my own farm. Anyway, when we reached Honolulu, the three of us from Hiroshima, only one of my friends and I were selected to work on a plantation. Our other friend didn't get a contract, and he had to work at a laundry for cheaper pay. We couldn't understand why, since he was better educated than we were."

He smiled. "Oh, what a beautiful welcome we seemed to have when we reached Honolulu. There were Japanese flags and banners in the streets, and bands marched from one part of town to another. We heard cannon being fired. The Japanese were screaming and yelling 'Banzai! banzai!' We were surprised and happy at the kind of reception they were giving us — especially since there were only twenty of us on the boat — and I wished I had brought Mother with me.

"But then I found out the Japanese people in Hawaii weren't celebrating our arrival. They were celebrating the end of the Japan-China War, which Japan had won. The Japanese in Hawaii knew Admiral Togo — he was the hero of a battle in the Yellow Sea — because Togo-san had been to Hawaii. To them, the Japanese in Hawaii, it was almost like they themselves had won the war, especially since they had made donations to the Japanese government.

"So when the war ended, the Japanese Consulate celebrated, and the children sang, '**Japan katte, China maketa, gunkan torarete naite inda** . . . Japan won, China lost, they got their ships taken and went home crying.'

"While walking, we passed a palace, a building called Iolani Palace. How beautiful and grand it was, with a row of trees leading to the front of the building. I'm sure the emperor of Japan has just as grand a palace, although I've heard emperors don't live in castles like the **shoguns** did. Do you know what a **shogun** is, Sachie?"

"Of course, Father. That's the warlord in power."

"Well, this palace, Iolani Palace, was made of some sort of stone and looked very solid. But somehow it looked empty, and sort of sad. I asked a Japanese man who had been living here for some years why the

palace looked so deserted, except for some soldiers. He told me the royalty of Hawaii who had so graciously allowed the Japanese immigrants to live and work in Hawaii were now prisoners of some white men. Things were changing. I was lucky, because when we came to Hawaii in 1895, the temporary government didn't know whether to allow us to stay or to send us back to Japan. The white men who took charge of the government didn't have a treaty with Japan concerning the immigrants. While these white men were deciding what to do, the plantations took us to the different islands, so we were able to stay.

"But the following year, many new immigrants were turned back. Imagine, saying goodbye to all your friends in Japan, being the guest of honor at parties and crying goodbye from the train.

"Now within a month, these immigrants were returning to their villages. They had to admit they hadn't been allowed to land. And no matter how much one explains about a change in government being the cause of this, still the other villagers would think he was a second-class worker and therefore unacceptable in the new land. Ah, yes, we all felt so sorry for those immigrants who were sent back."

"Did those people ever come back to Hawaii?" Sachie asked.

"Of course I don't know for sure, but I heard most of them did. Many didn't want to return to their villages again, and waited in Kobe or Yokohama. Some found good jobs, and didn't want to come to Hawaii after all. Others came because they had to show the people back home that they were welcome in Hawaii, that they weren't second-class workers.

"To come back to that celebration, when I first got off the ship . . . I was young and tall and handsome. The Hawaiian and Chinese women looked at me when I walked through the streets in my good **kimono** and wooden clogs. But I didn't look at them, or at the white men. All I knew was that I was a Japanese, and so proud to be one, even here in this far-off country. I was so glad I wasn't Chinese, because they had lost the war and I felt sorry for them.

"A few days later it was a different story.

"When we reached the plantations, we had to live in a small room, eight to a room, with hardly enough space to stretch our arms. When the **lunas** ordered us around and beat some of us, I just couldn't believe it. Here we were, farmers from Japan! And you know farmers are higher class than merchants or artisans, no matter how rich they are. Why, farmers are next to the **samurai** in Japan, and there we were, treated like slaves or the **eta**.

"But we didn't care too much, my friend and I. We said this kind of treatment was only temporary, and we wouldn't tell our families and friends in Japan how we had been treated, or we would lose face.

"So everything worked out well for me and my friend. We talked and talked about all the things we were going to do, and we planned to take the same ship back to Japan, so we wouldn't be alone traveling from Kobe to Hiroshima.

"Then one rainy November my friend caught a bad cold and had a high fever. He would have gotten well if only he could rest. But the **luna** demanded that he go to work, even though he could hardly stand. It was a busy season, and the new government in Hawaii hadn't allowed any more immigrants in for some time, so the plantations needed every hand."

The garden was peaceful, silent in the moonlight. The family waited. Then her father grew rigid and pounded the railing that circled the veranda. He seemed to relive the event that had happened so many years ago.

"One day my friend couldn't get out of bed. I stayed home too, and put cold towels on his forehead. There was a hospital on the plantation somewhere, we had heard, but that was for the white man. Well, on that morning, I heard a **luna** coming on his horse. I hid in the field. The **luna** came in and pulled my friend's blanket off. He kicked my friend in the stomach and even on the head with his heavy boots.

"My friend groaned and called my name, begging for help. But I was a coward and remained hiding. Then the **luna** got a bucket of water and poured it over my friend, saying, 'Get up, you bastard. Stop faking. We're wise to your tricks. Drinking soy sauce to get your temperature up, just so you don't have to go to work.'

"He searched the room and took my friend's pocket watch. Next he took a picture of my friend's mother, tore that into pieces, and threw the pieces on top of my friend. That's when I couldn't stand it any longer. Stealing is one thing. People steal if they are real needy. But tearing a picture doesn't serve any purpose. I ran out and hit him with something — I don't know what. He was much bigger than me — much heavier — but he was so surprised and I was so angry that I was able to beat him up. I dived at his legs, his boots, and he hit his head against a trunk, so that helped me. He was all bloody — his hair, his nose, his mouth, his whole face. Finally he got away from me and staggered to his horse. I chased him because I wanted to kill him, but he got away.

"I knew I couldn't stay at that camp any longer. The police would be

after me because I had hit someone in authority. The boss was always the boss, right or wrong. I still didn't know enough English to explain my side of the story, and I knew the police would believe the **luna** anyway. So I changed my friend's clothes, wrapped him in a dry blanket, packed a few of my clothes, took my money, and ran away.

"I walked mostly at night and hid during the day. People — Chinese, Japanese, Hawaiian, Portuguese — they all helped me by giving me food and directions on how to get out of the plantation and to a homestead. We had been hearing of a homestead called Kakela. So I always asked for Kakela, and finally I reached here. There were already a few Japanese farmers, and they helped me with food and clothes, while I helped them in the fields. Nobody turned me in although I was a deserter from the plantation. I bought a farm, using my money and a friend's name.

"I found out later that my Hiroshima friend was taken to a hospital by the big boss who came to investigate. He died the day after I left. Some people buried him, but where he's buried I don't know because I kept away from that plantation. I wrote to his parents, but I didn't say much. What could I tell them? That I had deserted their son when we had promised to help each other in this foreign land? I had treasured my own life over his. I was ashamed, yet I was helpless.

"The only good thing that came from this is that I heard that **luna** was taken off his job. Also, I heard other **lunas** were told to check the sick more carefully, to see if they were really ill, or if they were faking. If they were really ill, they were to be taken to the company hospital. Good labor was still hard to get.

"Remember, this was over 30 years ago. Conditions have changed since then."

"You were a coward, a big coward," Sachie accused her father. "Why didn't you go to the plantation boss and explain? The **luna** would have been punished. The boss would have understood. I know he would. You were a coward!"

"Sachie, stop that!" her mother glared. "How dare you talk to your father that way."

"But it's true, Mother. It's true. And why can't we tell the truth, at least within our own family?"

"You can tell the truth, but you can be polite about it. In a Japanese home, children are always polite to their parents."

"In a Japanese home you do this . . . in a Japanese home you do that . . . that's all I hear around here. Well, I'm not Japanese. I'm American. And you know what my teacher says about the Japanese in Hawaii?"

"What?" Toki asked.

"She says Japanese people have no guts. We obey, even when we know it's not right. We're too quiet and we don't stand up for our rights. We are yes-yes people, and that's why we're laborers, not bosses. We'll continue to be nobodies, just like Father and Mother, stuck on this farm forever."

"Hey, wait a minute," Toki broke in. "Don't include me with your nobodies. Or Father and Mother, either. They're not nobodies, except maybe to you. Father had a dream, a dream to own his own land and to be independent. He made that dream come true. He cut himself off from his family and country, but he made that dream come true. So don't go calling him a nobody. If you have your own dreams, achieve them yourself, and don't go blaming Father if you don't. And don't knock his dreams, either."

"But Father tells us not to stand out from the crowd, not to be conspicuous. I want to stand out from the crowd. I want to fight for my rights. Father's 70. He had his life. Now we should have ours. Toki, you're 21. Haruo, you're 18. Hanako's 15 and I'm 13, going on 14. If we don't act soon, it'll be too late for us, and I'll end up being a farmer's wife. I hate farming, you know that." She turned to her Father. "Father, you could have tried, at least. You could have looked for an interpreter."

"Sachie, life on the plantation during those days was different from today." Toki explained. "Remember Father said the people didn't know too much about the government. In 1898, who was the government? The Hawaiian royalty? The white men who seized power? The American government that was thinking of making Hawaii a territory? Under those conditions, without a stable government to help the immigrant, do you think Father stood a chance against a white man, a boss?"

"Apologize to your father, Sachie," her mother commanded.

"No, no, you don't have to, Sachie, because you're partly right. Toki is partly right too. We didn't know who was in power, what our government was. If Hawaii belonged to the Hawaiians, to the royalty, as it did before 1895, we would have had a chance, for I heard they were very fair to the workers from foreign countries. Hawaii had a treaty with Japan that gave workers certain rights. Also, if the Americans were in

charge of the government, surely we would have had a fair trial, too, since America was known to be a compassionate country.

"But with the white men who had seized the islands, we didn't know what to expect. Each community at that time had some greedy white men who were looking for power, and they wanted law and order whether they were fair to people or not. So I didn't want to take the chance and go to the plantation boss when the **luna** beat up my friend. After all, I didn't even know what he looked like or where his office was.

"But Sachie is right when she says we were gutless. It isn't that we were gutless. It's just that we didn't care. Many of us Japanese tolerated many things in Hawaii we wouldn't have tolerated in Japan. It's because we thought we were going to be here only temporarily. We didn't really care about Hawaii. We didn't care about changing conditions. This was not our land. We just lived day by day, saving our money and thinking only about the day we would walk into our village at home in Western clothes, and buy a farm of our own. Our dream was to show the rest of the village we had succeeded. Our dream was to show our older brother we were no longer dependent on his field.

"We were wrong. The Chinese, who came to stay, were right. Now, enough of this. Sachie, you are right. I am a coward. I'd rather avoid a fight, then fight and win . . . or lose . . . There must be other ways besides fighting to solve a problem . . . Prayer time!"

Her father stood up, and they all followed him to the living room altar to pray, as they did every night before going to bed. **Moromoro no zyogyo zyashu jirikino kokorowo furisutete** . . . Sachie chanted. She didn't know what it meant, but it didn't matter. It had a togetherness sound, and together, today, they had won over Bakka-man, a white man from a plantation.

"I love you, Father," she thought. "But I still wish I could have been born to a rich Caucasian doctor or dentist."

A week later, Sachie said, "Father, I went to the library every afternoon this week. I asked the librarian for articles on immigration to Hawaii, and she helped me find some material. I found out that Japanese immigrants who came to Hawaii after 1894 weren't all on three-year contracts. Some plantations found some workers were troublemakers, or lazy, so they had only one-year contracts. That way, if a man was a troublemaker, they didn't renew the contract. They didn't like poeple who could read or write, or were from high-class families, because most times these were the troublemakers."

"What do you mean, troublemakers?"

"Well, asking for more pay a month, and things like that."

Her father closed his eyes. Everyone stopped chewing, since they wanted him to have quiet.

When he opened his eyes, he said, "Sachie, I think you're right, come to think of it. When I came with my two friends from Hiroshima, an interpreter to a white man asked if we could read and write. I don't know why, but I said no and my friend said no, and we were selected to work on a plantation. The friend who said yes wasn't selected. But he could't complain, because we came in as what was called 'free' immigrants."

"See, father, so maybe you weren't on contract with the plantation. Anyway, if the plantations had really wanted to find you, they could have. They're not dumb, you know. Even I could have found you. So i don't know why you avoid them."

"No, you wouldn't, Sachie."

"Father, when did you run away? And when was the last payday? Maybe you have some back pay coming. After all these years, the interest could be really something." Everyone laughed, and her father looked pleased.

Later that night, as she lay in bed, she heard her parents talking.

"Well, now you can go to town . . . to church . . . and to the movies. You don't need to be afraid of plantation white men," her mother said.

"No, I can't," her father answered. "I'm still afraid. Not for myself, but of what I might do, and the shame it might bring to the family. You see, I think that if I ever recognized that **luna**, even after 36 years, I'd beat him all over again. I still have anger. I still want revenge for my friend who died so many years ago. But I have to keep the bitterness within me. My friend will never come back, and that's the price I have to pay for not protecting him that day, the day the **luna** came. If I had stopped the **luna** from pouring water over my friend, chilling him, my friend might still be alive. So it's my punishment, my load of stone, tha I must bear. I'm still bitter, and I don't ever want to run into that **luna** again."

"But I thought you were pleased. You looked happy, when Sachie was talking to you."

"Of course I'm pleased. Of course I'm happy. I'm happy that our children have the kind of education which makes them look things up by themselves. I'm happy that they stand up for their rights. That means our children won't have others pushing them around, the way we were. I'm happy I made the choice of remaining in Hawaii and rais-

ing the children here. It was worth the misery, the suffering we went through, to have our children be the way they are. Aren't we lucky, Mother?"

Kakela, a scattered cluster of homestead houses in the northeast end of Hawaii, never appeared on maps. Only forty families — 22 Japanese and 18 Portuguese — lived there in the early '30s.

To the Japanese, this was their first piece of land. They were younger sons of families in Japan, and since always the first-born inherited the land in Japan, they had never owned land.

Fifty acres of land covered with **lehua** trees, fifty acres was theirs for a small sum of money if they built a home and farmed the land, they had been told. Why, what else would anyone do with land, if not to build a home and farm the land? Fifty acres, which was more land than even the richest villager back home owned. America, it was a wonderful land for the poor!

But not everyone could save the money to purchase a homestead, and not everyone wanted to spend a lifetime farming, so it was only 22 Japanese families that settled in Kakela instead of in towns and in Honolulu. They chopped the **lehua** and guava trees, replaced them with orange, lemon, peach, avocado, apple and loquat trees. They cleared the land and planted bananas, corn, potatoes, cabbages, peanuts, turnips, beans, carrots and leek. Everything grew.

Perched on a hill overlooking part of Kakela and the Pacific Ocean, the Himeno home was surrounded by vegetable gardens and coffee bushes. In the front yard was a huge avocado tree in which the mynahs roosted noisily every night. The flower garden was always a riot of color, with dahlias, fuschias, pansies, asters and azaleas growing practically wild. From the veranda, Sachie could see the interisland ships ply their way to Hilo, fifty land miles away. On clear days she could see Maui, the island closest to Hawaii. To the east rose the faint outline of Kohala Mountains, and to the north, the often snow-capped Mauna Kea.

Down the road, around the bend from the Himeno home, lived the Gouveias. Laura, Eva, Jane and Harry Gouveia were all single, all middle-aged, all good-looking. Often people asked why the Gouveia girls weren't married, when there were so few single girls in the community. They were good cooks, could milk cows, bake the best bread in

both Kakela and Fraserville, and were always neat and clean. But the girls ignored the few men who tried to court them. Nothing seemed to happen in their lives until one day Harry brought home a woman and said, "Now don't get mad but I got married in Hilo this morning." They took one look at the girl, went into their bedrooms, and locked the doors.

Beyond the Gouveias lived the Akinas. Mr. Akina had been a champion cowboy, but even champions make mistakes, and he had been thrown off a horse and killed. Mrs. Akina, Joe, Roselani, Pualani and Abel managed to live on a small pension and raised vegetables, chickens, pigs, and cows. Because she was such a gracious widow, people from both Kakela and Fraserville shared things with Mrs. Akina. School children always made it a project to bring Christmas, Thanksgiving, and Easter baskets to Mrs. Akina. Mrs. Akina accepted these cheerfully, but when Joe got a job she said there was no more need for baskets. The children, however, didn't know where else to take their baskets, so they kept coming to the Akina farm with candy, cookies, and old canned goods.

In the other direction of the Himeno home, half a mile up the road, lived the Itoga family. Mr. Itoga was tall and frail, Mrs. Itoga was tiny and strong. Ayako and Shigeo, the two older of the children, had dark curly hair and blue-grey eyes. Arlene, the youngest and Sachie's closest friend, had straight black hair and slanted black eyes. No one, even in jest, mentioned Ayako's blue-grey eyes to her, but Shigeo was always the butt of teasing. "**Hapa-haole** — half-white," they yelled at him, especially if they were losing in a fight or quarrel.

Beyond the Itogas lived the Togo family. Mr. Togo had scrimped and worked long hours to be able to send his only daughter to Japan to be educated, with the understanding that she would return with a **yoshi**, a husband who would carry on the Togo name. Instead, after a few years, the daughter married a man who not only refused to take the Togo name, he refused to even come to Hawaii. Because of this, Mr. Togo would not write to his daughter. However, he frequently received mail from Japan, and when he did, he sat twisting and wringing his kerchief.

Next to the Togo family lived the Higa family. It was strange. Mr. Higa was Japanese, yet he was not Japanese. The Higas ate Japanese food,

spoke Japanese, and were included in all the Japanese affairs in the Kakela community. Yet there was a subtle difference in the way the Japanese treated the Higa family.

"Why?" Sachie asked her mother.

"Well, they're Okinawan. Most of us — in fact, all the rest of us — are from Hiroshima or Yamaguchi prefecture."

"So what's wrong with being Okinawan?"

"They live too far away from Hiroshima. You have to travel by boat for several days to reach Okinawa. It's an island way down south of Japan."

"But mother, that's in Japan. We don't live in Japan. We live in Hawaii, in Kakela."

"Mr. Higa's parents still live in Okinawa. They speak a different language there. People from Hiroshima and Yamaguchi understand each other, but we don't understand the language of the Okinawans."

"We can understand the Higas, and they understand us."

"They're different."

"But you say they're Okinawans, and you don't want us to marry Okinawans."

"Sachie, I have nothing against the Okinawans, especially the Higas. I'm only telling you what my mother taught me. As much as possible, she used to say, marry someone from your own prefecture. That way, you understand not only the language but the ways of the people. Their customs, their beliefs, their special holidays. If you understand and believe in the same things, you will have fewer problems with your mother-in-law when you get married."

"That's another thing . . ." Sachie was going to say. Definitely, when she got married, she wouldn't live with a mother-in-law, the way Japanese families did. She would live alone with her husband . . . Then she saw her mother looked scared, fearful.

"It's hard enough, living with a mother-in-law, even one with the same customs, the same beliefs," her mother said. "Once when we were first married and your father picked three ripe persimmons from our tree and gave them to me, at night when no one was looking, somehow my mother-in-law, your grandmother, found out and scolded your father, her second son. Yet her first son could pick as many persimmons as he wanted and give them to his wife and children."

The terror of being discovered with the persimmons, even after all these years, must have been vivid to her mother. She seemed to shrink. Sachie felt anger toward that grandmother in Japan who had been so partial to her oldest son, so strict with her second son.

No wonder her mother didn't dare to be free and stuck to tradition. Being the wife of the second son, and especially of a son who went to Hawaii and didn't send for his wife for four long years. Living with a strict mother-in-law and a brother-in-law who must have begrudged her the food she ate — how hard it must have been for her mother! Waiting, always waiting, for the letter that would say, "Here's the money for a ticket to Hawaii. Come!"

"Mother, I'm going to take care of you all my life," Sachie promised. "And it's all right about the Okinawans. I understand what you're saying."

Close to the Higa family lived Mr. Muraki — poor Mr. Muraki, everyone called him. Poor Mr. Muraki had been looking for a wife for many years. In the beginning, he had asked for a single girl, but then he had said, "A widow will do. A widow knows what marriage is all about." But even widows did not want to work in the fields, day after day, with sun-dried, dirt-hardened hands.

Once, long ago, poor Mr. Muraki had paid for the passage of a picture bride. He had gone to Honolulu, sailing from the small wharf in Konohina, to the Immigration Compound in a place called Kakaako, to meet the girl whose picture he had gazed at for over six months. This was the length of time a couple had to be married in proxy before the husband could send for his wife.

He had felt guilty, for he had sent a friend's photograph to Japan, and the girl would be looking for the man in that photograph.

When they had called his name and her name, how proud, how happy he had been to be paired with her. She was as beautiful as her picture, even more so. The girl had looked at him with surprise in her eyes, but did not say anything.

A preacher had married her to Muraki. Fifty other couples were also married that afternoon. An official noted the marriages in a book and then Muraki was free to bring his bride back to Kakela.

Back home, Mr. Muraki would not let his wife work in the fields because she was so beautiful and she had such soft white skin. Instead, he sent her to Fraserville to learn sewing so that she could

become a dressmaker, which she said she wanted to be. That was fine, except that a tall, handsome, educated salesman from Hilo induced her to run away with him. Poor Mr. Muraki said he would forgive her and asked her to return. All would be forgotten. But she refused. Because she threatened to kill herself if he insisted, and under the Hawaiian law he had a right to insist, and because he loved her, he let her go. However, he did not divorce her, either the Hawaiian marriage performed by a preacher when she reached Hawaii, or the proxy Japanese marriage which was a Shinto ceremony followed by a recording of the alliance in the Muraki family record.

A year later he was sorry he hadn't insisted upon her return, either to him or to Japan, because he heard the salesman used her for prostitution. One week she was even sent to Fraserville. Poor Muraki-san couldn't and wouldn't believe it, and insisted on finding out for himself. He hid behind a panax hedge and saw men entering and leaving. He thought of going into the house and helping her escape, if it was indeed his wife, but he waited until she was alone.

Then it was too late, for the salesman came to pick her up. She walked out laughing and talking, almost as if she were leaving a party. He even heard her high tinkly voice say that it had been a good day.

Shaking and crying with shame at himself for defiling the Muraki name, he returned home. The next day, Sunday, he asked Sachie's father to write a letter for him, to be sent to the village office back in Japan. He was divorcing his wife, and her name was to be stricken from the Muraki records.

Kakela to the stranger was just a weatherbeaten group of homes, many not even visible in its tangle of trees and bushes. But to the people who lived there, each with his own heartaches and joys, Kakela was home — home as not even Japan with its terraced rice fields, its lines of cherry trees on river banks, and its persimmon trees framed against thatched roofs, had been. For here the land was theirs, theirs alone. And though they said they would return to Japan in another three or six or nine years, they planted trees that would not bear for many years, and they built a Japanese school for their children.

So what if they had no city water, indoor toilet, electricity or refrigerators? And why did they need a telephone? The Souzas had one which they were free to use in an emergency.

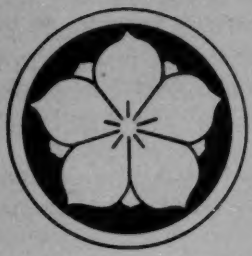
Kakela was the center of their lives, the lives of these immigrants

who had traveled thousands of miles to be independent of older brothers. Kakela was finally home.

But to Sachie, Kakela was a place to leave, just as her parents had left a place. She wanted to be somewhere more exciting, more challenging.

Someday . . . she thought. Someday I'm going to travel the world. I'm going to live in a city. White man from the plantation, some day I'm going to live the way you do, giving instead of taking orders. In a big two-story house up on a hill, so that my horizon stretches on and on. And Jerry Higa, when we grow up, we won't be Hiroshima Japanese or Yamaguchi Japanese or Okinawa Japanese. We'll be American Japanese. And Father and Mother, this is another land, different from the one you were brought up in. This is a land where first-born and second-born and last daughter are all treated alike. At least, you treat us that way.

And some day, Mother, I'm going to buy you a basket of persimmons, all for you. I promise, Mother, I promise.



CHAPTER 2

OCTOBER: A NEVER-SPOKEN-OF SON IS A NEVER-FORGOTTEN SON

"We couldn't do that. After all, we're Japanese. We're law-abiding people."

"Come, Sachie, let's check the fences. We don't want our cows going into Gouveia's land and eating his grass," her father said one Saturday. "And don't forget the **obento**. Make two rice balls for me." He tucked his flute into his back pocket, picked up his box of tools containing hammer and fence nails, and left.

Sachie was happy. Her father could have gone any day of the week to mend the fences. That meant he wanted to spend some time with her, unlike Sachie's mother who preferred to work alone.

Why was her mother so stern? She was kind, she was gentle, she

was friendly, but as soon as love seemed to flow from her, she cut it off. She would not let herself love anyone too much. Sachie did not have the same feeling for her mother that she had for her father.

The **obento!** Never mind about her mother for now. She had a job to do. Her father would be waiting for her. Sachie got up, washed her hands, sprinkled salt on them, and made four quite triangular balls of rice, each with a red pickled plum in it. She put these in a box, together with some dried fish and slices of pickled turnip.

Usually, in October, if the weather was dry, her father and brothers spent the days cutting down the huge **lehua** trees. **Lehua** made the best charcoal, according to her father. After a tree had been chopped down, Haruo and Toki tackled it with a six-foot saw. One person to each side, they pushed and pulled, pulled and pushed, until finally the blade gave a thin distinctive sound. This meant they were almost through the log. When the cut logs had dried, a sled was attached to Charlie, the stronger of the two horses, and the logs taken to the **sumikudo,** the charcoal oven.

The 14-foot **sumikudo** was built into the side of a hill. Aside from the small entrance, it was airtight. Her father and brothers would pull the dry logs through the small entrance and stack the wood in the semi-darkness, then set fire to it. The entrance was sealed, and the wood allowed to burn for five days.

During those five days, her father ate and slept at the **sumikudo.** He watched the smoke coming out of the entrance hole, making sure it was white or blue.

"If it's black, you have to let in more air by enlarging the entrance hole," he taught Toki and Haruo. "But if there's no smoke, that means the fire is burning too well, so make the entrance smaller. Let less oxygen in." Every two hours he checked the smoke.

On the sixth day, her father would open the **sumikudo.** Then, with a ten-foot rake, he would pull out the red hot logs. Her mother would douse him with a bucket of water every five minutes. Her brothers waited with shovels, and put out the fire in the logs by covering them completely with old ashes. Sachie's job was to keep buckets of water ready for her mother, which she considered the hardest job, since she had to walk from the **sumikudo** to the water tank and back to the **sumikudo** with a bucket of water every five minutes. By comparison, Hanako's job was easy. All she had to do was cook.

Today, because the charcoal was still under the ashes, her brothers cleared some guava-covered land, her mother worked in the vegetable field, and her father was doing his annual fence-checking.

Sachie ran west to the border which separated their land from Gouveia's property. She found her father walking along the path which ran parallel to the fence, his right shoulder slanted by the weight of the tool box. Sachie remembered he was 70; she didn't think she would ever live to be 60 or even 50.

"I'll carry the box," Sachie offered.

"Never mind," her father answered. "It's not heavy."

"I'll take it," she insisted, pulling it from him and running ahead to pick a ripe guava. She was barefooted, and her long brown arms were uncovered. Alternately she ran ahead, then lagged behind, teasing a bee, picking a ripe purple **lilikoi,** or chasing a Monarch butterfly. After a while she fell in step with her father.

"Father, I wish I weren't Japanese."

"I thought you're an American, not Japanese."

"You know what I mean. And why wasn't I born to a doctor or lawyer or teacher, instead of a farmer?"

"You haven't been happy with us?"

"Oh, I love you and the family, Father. It's just that I had to spend one-fourth of my life stuck on this farm. I wish I were 21, out of college, and able to go anywhere in this world . . . And I wish I weren't Japanese."

"Why?"

"Look at me. Straight black hair . . . stiff hair, like the horse's tail. Slant eyes, when I want round eyes. And I'm so black."

"You're not black . . . you're just tanned."

"I'm not tanned. I'm dark. I'm black. Do you know what the kids call me? Charcoal. That's because I'm dark, and then because we make charcoal to sell."

"What's wrong with making charcoal to sell? The people buy all we can make. They even put in their orders months in advance."

"Also, I'm so tall. That's your fault, Father, because I take after you. Hanako is small, like Mother. I hate it when Mother says, **'Einyobo konyobo'** . . . a beautiful woman is small, and dainty therefore."

"Do you believe that saying?"

"And that other saying . . . **iro shiro wa hichinan kakusu** . . . a fair complexion hides seven faults. Hanako is small and fair, and I'm tall

and dark. I have nothing going for me."

"Ah, but aren't you one of the smartest girls in your grade at school?"

"Are you kidding? Even that's against me . . . But there's one boy that likes me, I think. It's Jerry Higa."

"Well, aren't you lucky! He's such a courteous, friendly boy. And with a sense of humor . . . he's always making people laugh. Have you noticed, when he's around, all the other boys and girls become friendly and courteous? He's such a good influence."

"And another thing . . . my teacher laughed when she found out you were 70 years old. She must have told the other teachers, because the librarian asked me if my father was really 70."

"Hummm . . ."

"Someone said you're pretty old to have a child my age. My friends' fathers are all younger than 45."

"Hummm . . ."

"How come you're so old?"

"We grow older every day. I guess I was born too soon."

"Don't joke about it, Father. Most people 70 are dead."

"I don't think so. My older brother in Japan is still alive. Even my mother died only a few years ago. I think I can outwalk half your friends' fathers."

"My teacher said you were 55 or 56 when I was born."

"What's wrong with being a father at 56? Especially to a girl like you?"

"Stop joking. You're always joking. Are you glad you came to Hawaii?"

"Of course!"

"My teacher says all foreigners should be glad they came to Hawaii. Or to America . . ."

"She's right. Her ancestors must have been very happy."

"She said Japan doesn't have much level land, mostly mountains, and the people are poor. They don't have enough to eat. Did you have enough to eat, Father? In Japan?" She bit into another guava.

"Don't eat too many guavas. You'll get appendicitis. Then we'll have to take you to the hospital and open you up. Take out your appendix."

"Did you have enough to eat? In Japan?"

Her father tested the tautness of the fence wire, sighed, and said, almost as if to himself, "I had enough to eat, but I was the extra per-

son, being the younger brother. My older brother, who owned the land after my father died, had to share the rice with his wife, three children, my mother and me. Then, when I got married, there was still another mouth with whom to share the rice. It was unfair to my brother, since there was so little land, so when I found out about Hawaii, I decided to come here. I wanted to earn money to buy my own farm in Japan."

He gazed at the green hills that made up part of the fifty acres. "They needed workers in Hawaii. A man came from Tokyo to act as interpreter. He came with a white man in a white suit. It was the first time I had seen a white man or a white suit or blue eyes. I was scared of him, he was so huge and hairy . . . like a monkey . . . but he wanted to shake hands with us. Maybe that's why I decided to come with my friends. The white man's handshake was firm, but so friendly.

"The interpreter said this white man wanted workers from Hiroshima prefecture. The man didn't want any workers from Tokyo. Anyone knows people from Hiroshima are hard workers. Even the white man from across the sea seemed to know that."

"Must have been scary, coming across the ocean to a new place," Sachie said.

"Yes, it was. But when I came, they said I was a free immigrant. That meant I didn't have to work for the plantation if I didn't want to. Of course there was no place else to work, since I didn't understand the language, so I went to work for a plantation. We were paid $12 a month."

"Only $12 a month? That's too cheap."

"Oh, but remember this was in 1895. Those who came earlier worked for $4 a month. Twelve hours a day, six days a week."

"That's not fair."

"Oh, it was fair. We came because we wanted to. We were provided a place to sleep in. Things were cheaper then. Hundred pound bag of rice was about $3.00, a tub of **shoyu** was $2.50. That lasted us a long time because we tried to use salt as much as possible. Salt was very cheap.

"Did I tell you I came on the China Maru? There were only 20 of us, that time in 1895, and we all became good friends. We called the ship Nippon Maru, because we had been trained to hate the Chinese . . . because of the China-Japan War of 1894. Of course it was hard to hate the Chinese because I had never seen one in my life until I came to Hawaii. And when I came to Hawaii, I found the Chinese were like my

brothers'. . . we ate about the same kind of food . . . and together we disliked the Portuguese **lunas** and the **haoles**, because they were our bosses."

"What about the Hawaiians?"

"We didn't see many Hawaiians, except for the Akinas. The Hawaiians didn't work on the plantations. But they hated the **haoles** more than anyone else, because the **haoles** were taking the land away from the Hawaiians."

"Oh, that was the time of the revolution? Queen Liliuokalani?"

"That came a few years later. I came in 1895. In 1897, over one thousand Japanese came to work in Hawaii, but the government wouldn't let them land. Poor people . . . they spent all their life savings getting ready to come to a place they didn't want to come to, and then the new land didn't want them. I told you about this, didn't I?"

"Yes. Mother came in 1899, you said."

"Yes. There were close to 400 people on the ship she came on, and this was July . . . mid-July. You can imagine how hot and stuffy the bunks and cabins must have been. Poor Mother! That was a popular year for immigrants. Would you believe over 25,000 Japanese immigrants came to Hawaii that one year? More than any other year . . ."

They reached the large cypress tree at the top of the hill overlooking most of the farm land. He sat down and leaned against the trunk of the tree. Below them were green fields. In the pasture, Charlie, the white horse, and Betani, the reddish one, nibbled daintily. In one of the fields Sachie could see her mother, a white cloth towel around her head to keep the sun out, and blue denim on the rest of her. She was bent over the cabbage rows, slowly going from one plant to another, occasionally straightening up tiredly.

"Sachie, when you see an old immigrant, you should honor and respect him, because it's not easy to go to another country. The food is different, the language is different, and you can't catch a bus or train and go home when you feel you can't stand it one day longer. To be so far away from home, and not have the money to return. And knowing you wouldn't be welcome even if you did return, if you couldn't settle on another farm."

He sat down in the shade, putting his flute to one side, and closed his eyes. "We were miserable, miserable. I think it was chiefly because we couldn't understand what our bosses wanted. All we knew is what the interpreter said. Even when the **lunas** scolded us or beat us, we didn't

know what it was for. Once a **luna** beat Honda, who was digging a ditch. Honda dug faster and faster, and the **luna** yelled at him and even threw rocks at him. Later we found out he wanted Honda to stop digging, to do something else."

"We all wanted to go back to Japan so badly. We talked of nothing except the farms we were going to buy when we got home. But of course it was hard, saving money. Finally, when I reached Kakela, I decided to have your mother come. Then, when Toki was born, and Haruo, well, we sort of changed our minds about going back . . ."

"On the plantation, we slept in a small room, eight of us. My space was a 3 x 6 mat. Every time I yawned and forgot, I hit Tanaka in the face, and he would punch me. We had to sleep straight, like in a coffin. And Honda! Honda was always yelling in his sleep because the **luna** would beat him all the time. Honda would scare us, yelling in the middle of the night, and bowing and apologizing. How many times we had to wake him up. Poor Honda!"

"What happened to him?"

"Honda? The last we heard, he was in Honolulu. They say his son is in a university there. Imagine, Honda's son going to a university! How proud Honda must be. He was always black and blue, because the **luna** liked to pick on him. Some day, Honda used to say, some day he was going to kill the **luna**."

"Did he?"

"Did he what?"

"Kill the **luna**?"

"Honda couldn't even kill a chicken. Although he was a good cook. And that's the funny part. Honda started learning English, and then, since he was a good cook, the big boss, the one who bosses all the **lunas**, asked Honda to be his cook. After that, the **luna** couldn't do anything to Honda, even though Honda acted sassy to him. Honda said once he spit on that **luna's** food before serving him, to pay for all the beatings he had gotten. But I don't believe that.

"The big boss took good care of Honda, in fact I think he is paying for the son's education. That's the thing you can't understand about the white people. The good ones are so good, and the mean ones are real mean. Take Mr. Scott, the big boss. He's a really good man. Then take Bakka-man. He hurt so many families in Fraserville. Thank heavens the people in Kakela are smarter, and don't get taken in by him."

He sat up to look at Sachie, seemed satisfied, and then said, "Let's eat. What did you bring for lunch?"

After lunch, after drinking some tea with their rice balls and dried fish, her father took his flute. He wet the rice paper over one of the holes in the flute, and began playing a tune he loved. The high sharp notes pierced the clear air over the pasture and reached the fields below.

At the sound of the music, her mother straightened and looked toward the hills. Then, slowly, she bent down again to her work. Her father saw the movement, even at that distance. He put the flute aside and said, "Come, let's see if we can help your mother."

"But you just started playing," Sachie protested. She wished she could lie under the cypress tree, listening to his music, listening to him talk.

But her father, without another word, picked up his tool box and walked down to the vegetable fields.

Her mother was bent over a cabbage. She would peer between the leaves of a loosely formed cabbage, turn over a leaf, pick up a worm, and rip it in two. Somehow she knew just where the worm would be.

"Sachie, go and gather the dried horse manure. The pile in the shed is low. If we leave the manure out too long, it won't be any good."

This was terrible. Sachie had thought her mother would ask her to pick off the cabbage worms. She hated killing cabbage butterflies, since they looked so pretty in the air and as they fanned themselves on a cabbage leaf. She hated even worse finding the green worms and ripping them in two. Yet that had to be done, or there would be few cabbages worth selling. But shoveling manure, this was the worst job on the farm. The menfolk did not have to do it. Only women and girls were given such dirty jobs.

"I'm helping Father check the fences," Sachie said.

"Your father can check the fences without you," her mother answered. She went back to the cabbages.

"Go ahead, Sachie. See how much you can get. We sure can use that manure."

As Sachie slowly made her way to the shed where the wheelbarrow, shovels and manure were kept, she thought, "Mother is so unfair. She makes me do all the dirty jobs. My brothers don't have to do these jobs." Always, it seemed, the boys were favored.

"Don't eat until the boys start," her mother would say. Then, when she did eat, she had to eat the burnt rice first.

"Clean up your bowl," her mother said. "Do you think we have rice to waste? Every grain came from Japan, thousands of miles away. Do you think the farmers raised this rice and sent it over that ocean for you to give to the pig? You mustn't waste even a grain of rice."

But to her brothers, her mother would say, "Leave some rice in the bowl. It shows you can waste rice if you want to. We have to fool the gods into thinking we are rich and can waste rice if we want to. Even the gods like rich people."

It was the same with the bath. Always, the boys and her father would have to finish bathing before Sachie could scrub herself and soak in the square wooden tub of steaming water.

Sachie got the wheelbarrow, a shovel with a short handle, and some burlap bags. The day was warm, and the task not too unpleasant. The manure was dry and light, like tufts of dried grass. If no one knew, she thought, I wouldn't mind doing this. But if my friends found out, they would call me "manure girl" in addition to "charcoal." Why can't mother buy fertilizer, like the other farmers, she fumed.

"My, such industriousness. Why do you work so angrily?"

She had not even heard her father coming. "I don't understand Mother. She doesn't like me, the way she does things only for Haruo and Toki. Always it is Haruo and Toki, not Hanako and me. Just because they're boys."

"Nonsense, Sachie, of course your mother loves you. Maybe even the most, since you're our youngest."

"She's not fair."

"Maybe it seems that way to you. After all, she was raised in Japan, and she wants to raise you the way she was brought up. She sees the way young people are acting nowadays, and she's afraid you children will be like that too."

"Like what?"

"Well, like not respecting your parents. Some young people are so rude to their parents. They don't talk to their parents just because the parents can't speak good English. But the parents are good in Japanese, where the young ones are good in English. What makes the young ones better than the parents?"

"This is America. This is Hawaii. The parents should learn English. How long have you been in Hawaii, Father? Over thirty years? Isn't that

long enough to learn a language?"

"Sachie, Sachie, it's not that simple. It's so hard to learn English. English goes balabalabala . . ."

"I don't think you even tried to learn English."

"Getting food in our mouths then was more important than learning English, Sachie. Some day, when you're older, and you want to learn another language . . . German or French . . . you'll find how hard it is."

"Mother still makes me mad. Always picking on me. Just because I'm not like Hanako. But I don't want to be like Hanako. She has no guts. She's sweet just because everyone says she's sweet, and now she's a goody-goody, no guts."

"Sachie, you know you don't mean that. Are you jealous because Hanako's hair is curly, she's fair, her eyelashes are long, and her eyes are round?"

Sachie stopped shoveling manure into the burlap bag. "Maybe," she admitted.

"Sachie, try to understand your mother. She's had such a hard life. Living with my mother, my brother and his wife for so many years, and losing a son . . ."

"What do you mean, losing a son?"

"We had a son in Japan, Sachie . . ."

"Had? We had a brother in Japan? How come no one ever said anything about this? How can you treat me like that, not even telling me about my own brother?"

"There wasn't any use in telling you about him. By the time you were born, he was dead. Your mother never talks about him . . . never even mentions his name . . . although I notice she leaves food in the altar for him on his birthday. And I never think of him if I can . . ."

"Tell me about him. How old was he when he died? Where is he buried?

"Eighteen. In Japan. He died all alone, even though my older brother tried to be good to him. But he had tuberculosis, you see, and there was no cure for tuberculosis in those days. My brother and his wife were afraid for their own children . . . afraid of their catching it . . ."

"Why did you send him to Japan?"

"We didn't. He was born in Japan, after I came to Hawaii, and before your mother came. I had a hard time raising money for him to come to

Hawaii. But when I did get the money, when he was about 15, he caught pink-eyes on the ship."

"What's pink-eyes?"

"I don't know what the English word for that is. But the immigration people said anyone with pink-eyes had to go back to Japan, that pink-eyes was contagious. We explained that he didn't have pink-eyes when he left Japan . . . that he had papers to prove he was in the best of health. But the explanation was useless.

"We said we could put him in a hospital . . . of course we couldn't because we didn't have the money . . . but the immigration people said he would have to leave. It was the law. But they must have felt sorry, for they let him off the ship for one day. For that I am grateful."

"What did you do?"

"We walked. And walked. And walked. I don't know where we walked. It's a wonder we found our way back to the ship. Yoshio cried, not because he had to go back to Japan . . . I think maybe he was glad to go back to a place where he could understand the language. But he had expected to see his mother. He wouldn't believe she lived on another island, and he kept saying, 'If we walked real fast, could we reach home and back in time?' He was about your age, but he looked and acted younger, much younger. And so pale, Even fifteen days cooped up on the boat had made him thinner."

He picked some blue flowers from a weed and made a tiny bouquet. "Then on the way back he caught tuberculosis from someone who also hadn't been allowed to land. Three years after that he died, at eighteen, when one should be at the happiest stage of one's life. He died all alone in a shack my brother built for him in a corner of the land where no one could see him. We tried to do good for him by bringing him to Hawaii, and instead we killed him, for he would have been healthy otherwise. The pink-eyes, the tuberculosis — they were diseases caught on the boat, and we never knew this would happen!"

He threw the flowers, one by one, at his feet, and made a little mound of them with his shoes. "Your mother was waiting for us at the pier at Konohina. I could see her from the ship. She kept coming so close to the water, I thought she would fall in. She looked and looked for Yoshio but she hadn't seen him for over ten years so she didn't know what to expect."

"He was only four and a half when she had left him in Japan. Only four . . . just about able to understand. She said she couldn't bear to part with him at the train station, so they had him go to a candy store with his cousin. I understand my older brother grumbled about her leaving this small child for them to support, but I just didn't have enough money for the passage of two people then.

"Can you imagine that little child waiting and waiting and waiting for his mother to come home? How many times he must have asked, 'Where's mommy? When is she coming home?' Even if my brother's family said, 'She's in Hawaii,' what's Hawaii to a four-or five-year old? That poor, poor child . . . who grew up without a real family of his own! He must have said, 'Finally I'll be with my mother again. I'll see my father, and I have two brothers.' How happy he must have been when he boarded that boat. He didn't know then it would be the cause of his death."

A cloud passed over the sun and darkened the field for a moment. Her father looked at the cloud, and then the cloud passed and the sun was too bright for his eyes, for he had tears in them.

"I still remember that day, Sachie. Your mother wouldn't even cry. When we got home to Kakela, she went to the fields and dug the ground with a pick until midnight. I tried to get her to come home . . . I told her we would save more money and send for him again, but she wouldn't even speak to me. She knew we would never be able to save that much extra money again, and a new law was going to be passed soon so that Japanese immigrants wouldn't be able to come to Hawaii.

"Only once she asked, 'If they let him off the boat, why didn't you sneak him into the inter-island boat and bring him home? We could have hidden him in the woods. We could have built him a small house. The government wouldn't have minded. After all, it was only pink-eyes. All I had to do was wash his eyes with boric acid. It wasn't as if he had tuberculosis. Why didn't you bring him back?'

"But then she said, 'What am I saying? No, no . . . we couldn't do that. After all, we're Japanese. We're law-abiding people!' "

Sachie could imagine her mother digging in the fields. Even today, when she was angry, she would dig in the garden instead of slamming doors or crying.

"Ah, Sachie, how hard it was to say goodbye to my son and know that I would never see him again. Better if I had never seen him at all . . . better not to know what my son looked like than to remember him

as he walked back into that ship, so small . . . so scared . . . with the small amount of money I was able to borrow from a hotel man. He was only 15, after all. He looked so lost on that ship, with just a few others that the immigration officers wouldn't allow to land. Only one day in Hawaii, and another half a month in a rolling, smelly prison of a ship."

Her father looked older, more stooped. "When Yoshio died, part of your mother died too. Now she doesn't want to love anyone too deeply, for fear the gods will take that person too. She's so afraid.

"So when she seems to ignore you, Sachie, and tries not to show love, remember, it must be because she loves you so much she doesn't want the gods to know it."

He looked at the bags of manure Sachie had collected and said, "Here, let me take the wheelbarrow to the shed for you. I'm old, but I can do that much."

But already her mother's training was a part of her, and Sachie knew she couldn't allow her father to do that. So she said, "No, father. I can do this by myself. You go check the fences. And don't eat too many guavas. You might get appendicitis."

Her father smiled. She was proud of the look on his face.

CHAPTER 3

NOVEMBER: FARM ANIMALS ARE LIKE PEOPLE, OR ACT LIKE THEM

When Hisao, her brother's friend whom Sachie considered "dumb" was named postmaster, he suddenly and instantly became respected by the Japanese community. After all, he now worked for the "federal government," which was considered next to God.

Sachie was glad she had so many classrooms and so many teachers.

The shelter provided by the tall roseapple tree where two roads intersected and where some of the students waited for the school bus was a classroom. Sachie learned about the people in Kakela there.

The school bus was another classroom. Sachie learned from the few older boys and girls which Fraserville High School teachers and subjects were good, and who was going with whom.

The town of Fraserville was a large classroom. The post office, the churches, the library, the different stores were all part of this large and

exciting classroom.

Finally, the farm in Kakela was a classroom, and the teachers were not only her parents, brothers and sister but also the trees and animals on it and the neighbors living close by.

Monday, before she reached the roseapple tree, Sachie took out her wad of gum from the matchbox filled with sugar. She always saved her chewed gum because the only time her mother bought her a pack of gum was on Fourth of July and another pack the day before Christmas. Sachie treasured each stick and put her chewed wad into her matchbox of sugar each night. No one suspected she wasn't chewing a new stick of gum each morning. The gum was more than gum; it was prestige. It showed her parents could afford to buy gum.

When she reached the roseapple tree, she saw Ayako and Shigeo reading, Arlene playing beanbags on a smooth portion of the road, Jerry Higa swinging idly from tree branch to tree branch, and Abel up in the tree picking roseapples.

"Hey, Abel, throw me one," Sachie called.

"Here, catch," he said, throwing down the fragrant rose and yellow fruit.

"Did the bus go up?"

"Not yet. Look at my wart," Jerry volunteered. There was a big one, right on the side of his left thumb.

"How come you let a frog pee on you? That's how you get warts," Arlene said.

"That's not true. I never touch frogs, but I've had warts," Sachie said. "I know how to get rid of warts."

"How?"

"Get some spider web, tie it around the wart, and pull it off," Abel answered, sliding down the tree. He examined Jerry's wart.

"I know a better way," Sachie volunteered. "My mother said if you rub the wart with an eggplant stem, then bury the stem, by the time you forget where you buried the stem, the wart will be gone."

"How long is that?"

"I can't remember. Maybe it was four or five months."

"That's too long. Who wants a wart for five months? Maybe there's some ointment to take off warts."

"Ointment costs money. The spider web is better."

"A toad's real name is **Bufo marinus**," Ayako said. They all looked at her, because they hadn't realized she had been listening. Ayako was

the oldest among them, and she was usually right. Illogically, that settled the question of how to get rid of warts. Anyway, just then the bus drove up, with Roselani and Pualani Akina in it.

"Hey, pick us up too," Jerry yelled, running after the bus. But the driver ignored Jerry and kept going.

"How come he picks up your sisters and not us," Jerry complained to Abel.

"Ask him, not me," Abel mumbled, his mouth full of roseapple.

"Well, I know. It's because he likes Roselani. He wants to talk to her while they're at the terminal. Maybe ask her for a date."

"Oh yeah? Lots of people like Roselani, but she doesn't go out on dates. She's too young, my mother said."

"She's 15. That's not young. Lots of girls marry at 15."

"She has to finish high school. My mother said we all have to finish high school before we can get a job. Or get married."

"Who does Roselani like, Solomon Kealoha or Jimmy Sausage?" Jerry asked Abel.

"That's none of your business. And anyway I don't know."

It was a joke to the people in Kakela and Fraserville, the way Jimmy Sausage courted Roselani Akina. Jimmy Sausage wasn't Jimmy's real name. Few people bothered to know what his real name was since they all called him Jimmy Sausage anyway. Jimmy was short, had a long nose and bushy hair that he combed up high to give him height. He owned a sausage shop, and every Sunday he rode up to Kakela to visit the Akinas with a package of sausages: pork sausages, mild ones and hot ones. At twelve o'clock sharp he was at the Akinas, where he shyly said hello to everyone, put the sausages on the table, donned a denim apron, and went into the garage to fix odds and ends that needed repairs. He hardly ever looked at Roselani, except when he thought no one was looking at him.

"Jimmy Sausage doesn't stand a chance with Roselani. Not when Solomon Kealoha likes your sister too."

Solomon, who strummed the ukelele and sang even when riding, looked the way a Hawaiian cowboy should. His shirt was open at the neck, his levis were tight, and his boots shone. His skin was a golden mahogany, his teeth straight and white, and his brown eyes were warm and twinkly. He was so handsome people sometimes called him "Movie Star."

"My mother says Jimmy Sausage would make a better husband than Solomon Kealoha," Sachie volunteered. "He works hard, doesn't

drink, doesn't flirt with the girls. But me, I'd rather have Solomon . . . Movie Star!"

"Why doesn't Solomon take Roselani and Jimmy Sausage take Pualani? Or the other way around? They're both just as pretty. What's the difference?"

"Oh, nuts!" Abel muttered. Just then the bus came around the curve, and they all grabbed their books.

The bus had three narrow padded benches, one on each side and one in the middle. The older boys and girls sat on the center bench. There they could face either side of the bus and talk to their friends, but there was a disadvantage or an advantage to sitting there — no backrest. Consequently, when the bus turned a corner, the whole row squealed and hung on to each other. Sachie knew when someone was "going" with someone, for they would sit on the center bench and sway against each other at the slightest motion of the bus.

Sachie managed to sit next to Jerry Higa on the center bench.

"Sachie, how come you don't have an English name?" Jerry asked after the bus had gone a mile or so.

"I don't need one. 'Sachie' is good enough for me."

"Maybe your mother couldn't think of a good English name for you."

"Huh! My mother could think of English names. But she just wanted me to be 'Sachie, child of happiness.' What does Jerry mean? Nothing. 'Sachie' has meaning."

Jerry stood up and turned, then sat facing the other way. Poor sport, Sachie thought. Then she realized that if Jerry hadn't been thinking of her, he wouldn't have asked the question about her name. I ought to be happy about that, she told herself. So she said, "Your mother selected a name that sure matches you — Jerry Higa. Short and snappy. 'Hi, I'm Jerry Higa.' People will remember your name. What if your name was Mortimer Kazutoshi? Mortimer Kazutoshi Higa? 'Hi, I'm Mortimer Higa.' "

Jerry laughed and leaned against her. Sachie smiled smugly. She was learning about boys.

When the bus traveled the deserted four miles through the sugar cane fields, the kids sang and yelled and giggled and flirted, while a few tried desperately to study.

But when the bus neared the intersection and turned into the town of Fraserville, there was absolute quiet. People in Fraserville were

impressed. "My, those Kakela children are so well-behaved. Must be because they're Japanese. They set a good example for the noisy Portuguese."

The bus driver never told them the truth, because such praise gave him a good name too.

The town of Fraserville began with two churches, one a Catholic and one a Buddhist. Sachie had never entered the Catholic church, although she had peeked in. Her Portuguese friends went there on Wednesdays after school for catechism, which was good because the bus left Fraserville an hour later than usual.

All she knew about the Catholic church was that the Honolulu branch had ordered a former priest to Honolulu to discuss a decision the priest had made. People told the story over and over and over again, and each time added to it. Sachie had first heard it from her brother Haruo, as he was telling it to his parents at the dinner table.

"Remember the student who was killed while walking home through the cane field? And the police couldn't find out who did it? Well, a man walked into the Catholic church on Monday and confessed to the Father that he had done it. Then he called the police and told them that he had done it and the priest knew who he was. The police quizzed the Father, but he wouldn't tell who the young man was."

"Why? Shouldn't you put such people in jail? They put Freeman in jail every time he's drunk."

"Well, in the Catholic church, there's something called Confession. But the Father can't tell anyone else what someone confesses. That's a rule of that religion, just like in our religion, we can't eat meat for a week after a relative dies.

"The police demanded that the priest give them the name of the young man, but the priest wouldn't. Then the killer hanged himself. He left a note saying he had confessed to the priest, hoping the priest would give his name to the police, and they could jail him or send him to the insane asylum in Honolulu.

"The guy was really asking for help. The priest didn't help him," Sachie said.

"How do you know? The priest said he couldn't reveal what was said in Confession, but he had asked the young man to go to the police and confess. The young man had said no."

Because of this incident, another priest was sent to Fraserville, but

every time the bus passed the Catholic church, Sachie could imagine the killer and the previous priest. Sometimes they were crying together, sometimes praying together. And in the end, the young man had destroyed three lives — the student, the priest, and himself.

One of the two town hotels came soon after the bus entered the intersection. The hotel was owned by the father of a friend of Sachie's, and he was rich. Sachie knew this because his daughter Rae had lots and lots of dresses, and when Rae didn't want one of the dresses, her mother gave the dress to Sachie's mother. At first Sachie didn't want to wear Rae's hand-me-downs, but then she found out Rae was two years older, although in the same grade and not even making as good grades as Sachie. Besides, Sachie was taller than Rae. Somehow, that made her feel better. With that knowledge, she didn't care when others said, "Eh, that's Rae's dress, huh?"

Further down the street was Fraserville's one theater. Sometimes it showed Japanese movies. Sachie's first experience with a movie was when she was six. Her mother, brothers and sister went to see "Oiwa," about a woman who turned into a ghost. When the head of the ghost appeared with blood dripping from the mouth, Sachie shut her eyes. For six months afterwards, she saw the head clearly and vividly everytime she was alone and especially at night.

"It was just a movie, just make-believe," her mother told her when she begged her mother to accompany her to the outhouse after dark.

The outhouse was in a banana grove, and extra dark. Years later, she was happy they had an outhouse built for two, for she and her mother or she and Hanako could talk about the past and the future. The darkness made it easier for them to pour out their feelings and share their secrets. In fact, only in the outhouse would Hanako be open and treat Sachie as an equal.

Fraserville Library, two blocks from the school, was Sachie's greatest joy. She read almost a book a day, and some books, like Castle Blair, she read six to ten times. She read every fairy tale she could get her hands on, because fairy tales made life so simple. Everyone had a chance in fairy tales, no matter how ugly, how awkward, how weak they were. The good were rewarded, the evil punished.

The postoffice was in the building across the street from the library. The postmaster's job was a respected one, and when Hisao, her brother's friend whom Sachie considered "dumb," was named postmaster, he suddenly and instantly became respected by the community. After all, he worked for the "federal government," which was

next to God, and anyone who worked for the government, including teachers and policemen, had instant respect from the Japanese community.

"The job is a political plum," Haruo had said.

"What's a political plum?" she had asked.

"You'll learn about it next year, in civics class," Haruo had said. "Hisao has eight brothers and four sisters, and they can all vote."

Fraserville School, the end of the line for the school bus, had grades one through twelve, but there were only 453 students. There was an elementary school section on one side of the playground, and a junior high and high school on the other. Sachie liked being in grade 8 because there were some young Japanese men teachers in high school, whereas there were only elderly Caucasian women in the elementary school. The women teachers were kinder, more helpful, but the men teachers were more challenging, more exciting. Sachie loved school!

Home, and the neighborhood, were also classrooms for learning.

Mondays, after school, Sachie always took vegetables to the Gouveias, in exchange for bread. The Gouveia house, green-stained and moss-covered, squatted in an orange grove. Always on Mondays, Laura and Eva baked bread, and when the orange trees were in bloom and the bees hastened from flower to flower, the smell, sight and sound were intoxicating.

Laura's bread oven right outside the kitchen door was made of large stones and concrete, and part of it formed one wall of the kitchen. It ate mountains of wood, and when Laura opened the oven door, it was really "hot as hell." The leaves of the branches close by drooped, the bees disappeared, and the chickens scattered to the far side of the orange grove.

But when the bread came out, especially the sweetbread, ah, then the place smelled like Heaven must smell. The fragrance was like no other in the world. And the bread, hot and dripping with fresh butter, was something they all looked forward to during the week.

Today, however, the oven was cold. Laura, Eva and Jane sat and rocked, and when Sachie gave them the burlap bag full of cucumbers and potatoes, they thanked her, then ignored her. Sachie sat on the steps and waited for the bread and last week's burlap bag which would be given in return for the vegetables.

"Oh, the disgrace, the disgrace . . ." Eva moaned.

"Did you see the lipstick she had on? Such a red red! I don't think her name is Marlene. Most likely it was Mary to begin with," Laura added.

"I don't ever dare show my face in Fraserville again," Eva said. "Harry could have married any girl he wanted. Why did he marry a girl who was a prostitute? That's what I can't understand."

"Harry couldn't have married any girl," Jane, sitting to one side, said. "You know town girls don't want to live in Kakela. Tank water that runs out in summer, no electricity, going into the bushes to the outhouse, chopping our own wood all year round, working in the fields in sun and rain . . . I think we should give Marlene credit for coming to Kakela to live."

"Humph! Do you think she'll stay here long? She'll drag him to Fraserville or to Hilo by the end of the month."

"She has such soft eyes, though," Jane insisted. "Such sweet eyes. I was surprised . . ."

"Oh, anybody can fool you, Jane. But she can't fool me. She has a sharp, cunning look," Laura said.

"I think Marlene is beautiful, and she looks so happy," Sachie said. "She came with Harry yesterday to buy some potatoes."

Laura, Eva and Jane jumped. "What on earth are you doing here?"

"I'm waiting for my bread," Sachie explained.

"Oh, Sachie, we're sorry. You're right. Monday is bread day. But we just couldn't bring ourselves to bake bread this week because we've had some terrible news. Come next Monday, O.K? And you can have six loaves, instead of three."

Disappointed, Sachie walked home. But at the Gouveia house, the discussion was still going on.

"A prostitute! Imagine! Oh, the disgrace. And Harry may catch just what Mother told us about so many times. Why, Harry may die of the same thing Mother did. Stupid Harry! How many times Mother warned us."

And Jane, who had been too young to know the details when her mother had died, was told again how her mother had suffered because their father had been a no-good cowboy who liked to spend his weekends in Fraserville and even in Hilo.

"But we have doctors now, and better medicine," Jane said. "Harry can take care of himself."

"Humph, not this disease," Laura said.

Sachie, on her way home, decided to gather eggs, then feed the pig.

Gathering eggs on most farms was easy, and took very little time. The chickens laid their eggs in nests especially made for them. They even had mock eggs in the nests as a special inducement. The chickens dutifully and unimaginatively laid their eggs there.

The Himeno chickens were different. They looked innocent, scratching here and there in the yard, digging holes and fluffing their wings in the dust. But when they laid their eggs, they sneaked slyly into the woods. They hid their nests in rotting tree trunks, under thick bushes, in abandoned rubbish piles. They cackled only after they had moved some distance away from their nests. They were crafty, stealthy, cunning, underhanded. Anyone who called another person "chicken-brained" was paying that person a compliment if he meant the Himeno chickens. Consequently, it was a constant battle for the eggs between Sachie and the chickens, and often the chickens won, after which they triumphantly paraded their fluffy, yellow chicks.

The only chicken that was truly chicken-like was Reddy. Reddy was as guileless, simple and straightforward as the others were crafty. Reddy laid her eggs in the same place all the time. No matter how many times they took her eggs away, Reddy didn't mind. She just didn't seem to care if she became a mother or not. And, too, Reddy was trusting. When Toki fed the chickens in the garage instead of in the yard and suddenly closed the doors, the other chickens immediately knew he was going to catch one of them for the pot. They cackled and flew and tried to hide. Not so Reddy. Reddy followed Toki, getting in his way and rubbing against him like a cat. Consequently Reddy never got into a pot and would have lived a long and uneventful life had she not trusted a double-crossing mongoose.

After the egg-gathering, Sachie tackled the pig-feeding. The Himenos always kept a pig, which they caught as a surprised squealing piglet in the mountains in the spring. Feeding the pig was fun, for he was always so greedy. Sachie could never quite get over the appropriateness of the term "greedy pig," for the pig was always hooting and grunting for more food.

He wallowed in the trough, ate the food, and kept looking up to see if there was more, even though he was up to his knees in food. Although he was full, he wanted more, always more.

Below the pig pen was a fig tree. Each morning during the fig season, Sachie would gather a basket of the almost black figs, soft and velvety to the touch and bursting at the tips, exposing soft pink seeds inside.

Beside the fig tree, lined in a haphazard row, were peach trees. When they were in bloom, they looked like giant pink cotton candy floating in the breeze, delicate and fragile.

"It's just like being in Japan during cherry blossom time," her father said. "Except it's better because we have fruit after the blossoms. We never had peach trees on our farm in Japan. Imagine, having twenty peach trees all our own."

Then, "We have to thank the pigs for the figs and peaches." Somehow, to Sachie, it didn't seem right to have the pink clouds and the yellow-gold peaches related to the dirty brown, squealing and smelly pig.

Farm animals are like people, Sachie thought, or people are like farm animals. They can be trusting and loving, like Reddy, or greedy for more and still more, like the pig. But the trusting and loving could sometimes trust too much, like Reddy, and not contribute anything to the Himenos — no eggs, no meat, no chicken manure, nothing. And the greedy did good, if the pig was responsible for the figs and peaches gathered from the back slope. Somehow something was not right. She had learned that if one was good, one was rewarded. Like in the fairy tales. How come the greedy was contributing good to others, and the good didn't do any good?

Sachie's last duty of the day on Mondays, besides starting the bath fire which she did every day, was checking the kerosene lamps. The trouble with this job was, when the lamps were full and clean and the wick burned evenly and brightly, no one said anything to compliment her. But the day she forgot was the day they had guests and she had been busy listening to the conversation. It never missed. So the guests went away with her mother's words ringing in their ears.

"That Sachie! So lazy and irresponsible. Always wrapped up in her books. Who'll ask for her when she gets to be of marriageable age? Ah, I'm unlucky to have a daughter so tall, skinny, tomboyish and forgetful."

But, after supper, when the family gathered for prayers in the living room, her mother would call Sachie close to her and give her the thickest cushion, so that Sachie's knees wouldn't hurt when she kneeled to pray. Her mother would light the candles and incense in the altar, hit the altar gong three times to get the attention of the gods, and begin the prayers Sachie chanted but didn't understand.

And as their **moromoro no zyogyo zasshu jirikino kokorowo furi-sutete isshin ni amida nyorai** mingled with the gossiping of the eucalyptus trees bordering the fence, Sachie would feel peace, contentment. At night, with the family praying together and with the prospect of a good library book before her, Kakela did not seem like the end of the world but more the center of a vast universe.

CHAPTER 4

DECEMBER: THE MEDICINE MAN IS A WALKING ENCYCLOPEDIA

"We've been good citizens, obeying all laws, paying all taxes. But we can't ever be naturalized as Americans, even though we've lived here almost 50 years."

Late one Saturday afternoon, the Himeno family drove to Fraserville for the annual Christmas party given by Mr. Scott, the plantation manager. Sachie's father stayed home as usual, much as the others begged him to go.

The Fraserville High School band would begin playing at 6, Mr. Scott's greetings would follow, gifts and candy would be distributed to the children, and lastly there would be dancing in the street for the adults.

Sachie grumbled, "Why do I have to sit with you? I'm not a child any-

more." Her mother looked so grey and dull in that bright crowd. Sachie was secretly ashamed of her.

"Because you wander around," her mother answered, "and we won't be able to find you when we want to go home."

"Toki and Haruo don't have to sit with us. They could wander, too."

"That's enough, Sachie," her mother's voice was firm. Sachie sat down on a bench next to Hanako with a heavy thump, as much as her skinny body would allow. She recognized the bench as one from the school cafeteria.

After a short talk by Mr. Scott, the helpers passed out the gifts and candy. Sachie made a bet with herself. The gift would be two pencils and a tablet. The pencils would be No. 2, the kind her teacher wanted the children to use. The tablet would be the type with rough brown paper and wide lines. Sure enough, when she opened the gift that was identical for everyone, she found she was right.

"The same old thing every year," Sachie muttered.

"So what's wrong with that? It's very useful," Hanako said.

"Usefulness! That's all that matters to you," Sachie answered. "I'd rather have a useless gift that's a surprise."

The dancing began. The women wore long gowns, and the men black or white suits. All the managers and **lunas** and their wives were there. The women carried or wore white gloves. White gloves! Sachie thought she would never be rich enough to afford useless white gloves.

"Aren't they pretty, Hanako? When I grow up . . . of course I'm almost grown up now . . . but when I get to be 16, I'm going to learn to dance."

They watched the dancing couples. Soon Sachie noticed something she hadn't realized earlier. It was that the **haoles**, the white people, those from the plantations and those from the town, danced with each other in the center where the lights were brightest. Around their edges danced the Portuguese and the Hawaiians. On the sidewalk were the Japanese and the Filipinos and the Chinese. For all they were together, they weren't together at all. Hawaii was supposed to be a melting pot, but it wasn't. It was a stew, and the meat was still meat, the potatoes were still potatoes, and the carrots were carrots. They were in the same pot, but they hadn't become one. They were easily distinguishable, one from the other.

Then she saw Harry Gouveia and Marlene, Marlene who had put the Gouveia girls . . . Laura, Eva and Jane . . . in a stew. Sachie giggled.

What if Laura, Eva, Jane and Marlene were all in the same stew?

"She's so pretty," Hanako breathed.

"She looks like an actress," Sachie agreed. "Imagine someone that beautiful living in Kakela."

Just then Johnny Freeman walked up to the Gouveias. Johnny was the town drunk. He was sober and hardworking all month, until he received his paycheck. Then he got drunk and they had to lock him up to sober up.

Johnny was drunk now, or starting to be, for he had a mean look on his face. When he was completely drunk, he would sleep. When he was half-drunk, he made a pest of himself.

"Hey, Harry, what's the idea of stealing Marlene?"

Harry didn't answer, merely put his arm around Marlene.

"Can we go up to Kakela?"

"Shut up, Johnny," someone warned. "You want Harry to beat you up? What Marlene did before she got married is none of your business. Remember, she's Harry's wife now."

"Shut up . . . shut up . . . that's all I hear all the time. Well, Marlene ain't no spring chicken anymore so . . ."

Harry grabbed Johnny, but several others also grabbed Johnny and carried him off to a bar. "That's our Christmas present to you, Johnny, getting you drunk and locked away for the night."

Meanwhile there was new excitement in the Japanese section. Bachman, while dancing, had spotted Hanako, wide-eyed and demure in a beautiful white dress. Actually, the white dress was a hand-me-down from a Fraserville girl, but the girl had never looked as sparkling yet virginal as Hanako in it. Bachman walked over as soon as the music stopped.

"Aha, I've found you! May I have the next dance?"

"I don't dance."

"I'll teach you."

"I don't want to learn."

"Of course you want to learn. Come, let me show you how. Please."

He took Hanako's hand and tried to pull her up, but Hanako wouldn't budge. Then Bachman put his arm around Hanako's waist and tried to pull her up.

By that time Toki and Haruo, who had been in the crowd, moved over to Bachman and grabbed his arms. The Kakela farmers began making a circle around the three.

Across the street Mrs. Scott saw the commotion and nudged Mr. Scott, who immediately crossed over to where the Himeno family sat.

"Bachman, leave that girl alone, you fool. How can you act like this in front of all these people?"

"I'm just asking her for a dance."

"But she refused, didn't she? It looks that way."

"Aw, she's just shy. These people are like that."

"Leave her alone and go back to our side of the street. And stay there. That's an order."

The two walked through the circle of Kakela farmers, Mr. Scott saying, "I'm glad you could come . . . I hope you have a nice evening . . . hello, long time no see . . . Merry Christmas . . ." Bachman scowled silently.

"Come, Hanako, Sachie, we're leaving."

"Already? But Mother, we just got here," Sachie protested. Then she noticed several other Japanese families also leaving and knew it was useless to protect. She walked to their truck, climbed into the back, and stretched out on a blanker. She watched the full moon as it followed the truck home. By the time they reached home, she was half-asleep, and Haruo had to half-drag her to bed.

It was a few minutes later, or an hour, or perhaps it was only a dream. Sachie hea[illegible] mother say, "Maybe I'm too strict with her. Maybe, because I wan[illegible] to protect her, she'll grow up disliking me. I know she likes you better than she likes me."

"Nonsense, Mother," Sachie heard her father say, "Sachie is not stupid. She knows that whatever we do, we do because we love her and want the best for her."

"But things are different here. After all, this is Hawaii. This is part of America."

"What's the difference whether it's Japan or America? Parents look out for their children as best they can. Sachie understands, and if not, someday she will."

Sachie felt someone straighten the blanket, and then kiss her forehead softly, ever so softly. She didn't know whether it was her father or mother, until she heard her father's voice from the door saying, "Come, mother, make me some tea. I'm thirsty." There was a final pat of the blanket and then she heard the sound of their feet going toward the kitchen.

"**Ochini no kusuriyasan**! The medicine man! The medicine man is coming!"

"Always, in December, the medicine man came, ringing a distinctive bell from his black Ford. He not only sold medicine, he shared news and gossip from the various communities and islands. He had a phenomenal memory and was a walking encyclopedia.

Ossan, as Sachie called him, carried the most marvelous medicine! From his wooden chest he brought out medicine for everything from headaches and backaches to ulcers and childbirth pains. Describe the symptoms and he had the exact medicine for it. The amazing thing, one that Sachie found hard to believe, was that in most cases the medicine worked, and people in Kakela and even Fraserville very rarely visited the doctor.

Ossan had **Jintan**, a tiny pellet which was supposed to be good for any minor ailment and to keep the mouth smelling sweet. Another favorite was **Gotosan**, a yellowish powder wrapped in a square of waxed paper and which was guaranteed to lower the fever. Then there was **koyaku**, an ointment in a half clam-shell, which was used for boils and other skin infections. **Mikkasan** was for before and after childbirth; **Akadama**, a tiny red pellet, was for diarrhea; **Sokkoshi**, a plaster for headaches; and **Kumanoi**, a vile-smelling and bitter-tasting paste, for stomachaches.

Of course the best known, and one a family with children would never be without, was **Mushikudashi. Mushi**, or worms, could be blamed for any number of things. If children whined, with eyes red and puffy, they had **mushi**, tiny white worms. If children were finicky about their food, they had **mushi**, a long earthworm-like worm. If children were temperamental or looked or acted in any way different from their usual selves, they were told they had **mushi** and were given **Mushikudashi**.

Ossan trusted all people so long as they were Japanese. He left his medicine, whatever was needed, and six months later people paid him for whatever they had used. He replenished their supply and another six months later was back again. Whenever anyone moved, which was very seldom, he was sure to leave his name and address or his money for the medicine man. To cheat the medicine man was unthinkable!

So, today, when the familiar tinkle came before the black Ford itself, both Sachie and her mother hurried out to greet tired dusty **Ossan**. But although the Ford and the bell were the same, the man was a stranger.

"Ah, you must be Himeno-san," he called out. "I'm Nishida, and I'm taking Tanaka-san's place because he's ill and can't work at this job anymore. The driving around the different islands was too much. You know how bad the roads are."

He could not miss the disappointment in the faces, so he added, "I knew this was the Himeno farm because Tanaka-san told me you had the most beautiful garden in Kakela. My, you have a lovely view, being on a hilltop like this. What mountain is that?"

"That's Kohala Mountains, and that one is Mauna Kea. And do you see that mass of black over there? That's the island of Maui."

"**Maa**, imagine being able to see that far. The air is so clear here. And the smell . . . why, isn't that the rare three-needle Japanese pine?"

"Yes," Sachie's mother said proudly. "And look, do you know what kind of tree this is?"

"A tea bush! My goodness, a tea bush! Why, just seeing this tea bush takes me back to my home village in Okayama, where we raise tea on every hillside. And do you know, although we raised tea, we had to drink the tea made from old leaves and the small stems? The good leaves we had to sell."

Somehow this admission endeared the new medicine man to Sachie's mother, for she invited Nishida-san to stay the night and to tell them what was happening in the world outside.

That night they all sat in the living room to talk. **Ossan** told them about the things he had seen and heard on his trips.

"Did you know that an Old People's Home is going to be built in Honolulu for the old and needy? There are some old Japanese on Welfare, and some in the Charity Hospital, and when the Japanese Home is built, such cases can be taken care of at the Home."

"What happened to the children of these old people? Why aren't they taking care of their parents?"

"These men were single men. Now they have no one to turn to."

"How sad . . . I used to envy them, the way they lived," Sachie's father confessed. "They gambled, they had warm clothes in winter, they encouraged other men's wives to cheat on their husbands, and they were always laughing and having a good time. Now they must depend on strangers to take care of them."

"Yes, it's sad. Also, did you know some Japanese who served in World War I had been promised citizenship and even given papers but

the Territory refuses to recognize this citizenship? Every other race — except the Asians — got their citizenship. The Asians cannot be naturalized. We have been good citizens, obeying all laws, paying all taxes, but we can't ever be naturalized as Americans, even though we've lived here almost 50 years."

"Don't give up hope, Nishida-san. The government could still change when they see what good citizens we are. Anyway, our children are citizens, and that's what's important. We have only a few more years to live, but our children have a lifetime ahead of them."

"Did you know our children are dual citizens? Citizens of Japan and of the United States? If you sent your sons to Japan, they could be conscripted into the Japanese army."

Sachie's father laughed. "There's no fear of that, at least. We don't even have enough money to go to Hilo, let alone Honolulu or Japan."

"The Japanese children in the English schools have done well. In fact, the plantations and the schools don't want Japanese children to have too much education. If our children graduate from high school, they may not want to work for the plantations, at least in the fields."

"That may be true of some plantations, but we have a plantation boss in Fraserville . . . a Mr. Scott . . . who used to send Japanese children to Hilo to finish high school. Sometimes even to Honolulu, to enter college!"

"Well, he's a rare one. Most plantation bosses don't want more than eighth grade education for their workers. Of course, right now with this Depression, they have nothing to complain. There's four or five people for every job they have. You're lucky, Mr. Himeno, you have a farm. People in the towns aren't eating well, you know. But you, you have all the vegetables you need."

"Yes. Of course we have to work hard to raise these vegetables. Now fruits . . . that's another matter. They just bear from year to year."

"How many acres do you have?"

"Fifty."

"Fifty! And your own cows!"

"Only four cows. One's a bull, so we only have three milk cows."

"How lucky you are. And I heard you've been sharing your vegetables and fruits with needy families in town."

"Oh, that's nothing. People don't have the money to buy the vegetables because they don't have jobs now, and they've been customers of ours for a long time. So where I can help, I try to help."

"Everywhere people have been praising you. They hold you in such high respect. You care about people, and you do something to help."

"The gods have been kind to me. See, Toki, Haruo, being on a farm is not all that bad."

"Time for bed," Haruo said. He had heard this . . . about how lucky they were . . . many, many times. The boys went to their room, and Sachie and Hanako to theirs, but Sachie left the door open so she could hear what was being said.

"Tomorrow morning, you'll be going to see the Itogas, right up the hill. Ah, such a sad family. You musn't act surprised if you see anything different."

"What do you mean, different?" Sachie was glad **Ossan** asked the question because she was curious too. She had never thought of the Itogas as being a sad family or different from other Kakela families.

"The two older children are **happa,** half Japanese and half-white," her mother explained. "But it wasn't any of the family's fault," she hastened to add. "Mrs. Itoga is a good woman who would die for her husband. It all happened because Mr. Itoga became tubercular."

"Did it happen while he was in the hospital?"

"No. When Mr. Itoga became ill, Mrs. Itoga had to go to work, and the only place she could find a job was at a white man's home. She became a maid so that she could take home soup and eggs and meat for her husband, food the white man was going to throw away anyway. When she had a baby, and it had blue-grey eyes, he . . . the white man . . . wanted her and the baby to leave. But the white man's wife was kind and said Mrs. Itoga and her husband and baby were to stay until the husband was feeling better and could get a job. That shows how kind she was, this white woman.

"But about a year and a half later, Mrs. Itoga had another baby, a boy this time, with blue-grey eyes. The woman gave Mrs. Itoga some money and told her to go to Kakela, where Mr. Itoga could have clean air, fresh fruits and vegetables. The Japanese families here helped them to get settled, just as they helped me, and now Mr. Itoga is much better. They've been here 14-15 years, I think."

"Did the woman send them to Kakela because she was afraid the Itogas might try to claim an inheritance through the boy? After all, they didn't send the Itogas away when they had a girl."

"No, no, that's not the way we heard it. We heard the **luna's** wife was sickly and childless, and she was becoming so attached to the

children, she sent them away before she found she couldn't give them up."

"What a good, kind woman she was," the medicine man murmured. "Like a Japanese woman, wasn't she? Keeping Mrs. Itoga even after the first baby was born . . ."

"Wasn't she, though? That's what puzzles us about the white man. The good ones are so good."

"It's too bad the husband couldn't resist temptation. Yet I can't blame him, for any Japanese man would have done the same thing. Don't you think so?"

"Well, not all Japanese men, but many, yes. Even here, in the islands, we have Japanese men who try to steal the Japanese women away from their husbands, just because they don't want to pay passage money for a wife from Japan. So I guess men are men no matter what country they come from."

"So some of the white men are good men."

"Oh, yes. You take Mr. Scott, the head boss of the plantation. He's like a father to the people, even to us in Kakela, though we're not plantation workers. When someone is sick, he can go to the plantation doctor. When a boy from Kakela broke his arm . . . he fell from a tree while picking peaches . . . Mr. Scott told the hospital not to charge the family anything. He's that good.

"But there's one man, a man called Bakka-man, who's a pest," Sachie's mother broke in. "He's made several girls pregnant. He hires them as maids and promises them and their parents all kinds of things."

"Why doesn't someone report him to this Mr. Scott?

"They did, but nothing happened. I don't know if it's true because we don't associate with plantation white men, but someone told us Mr. Scott's sister was Bakka-man's first wife, and she ran away with another man. And that's why Bakka-man is like that. He's ashamed so he tries to show he can get any girl he wants. They say Mr. Scott doesn't fire Bakka-man because he understands Bakka-man's feelings, and he feels guilty about his sister running away from her husband."

Sachie shivered in anticipation. What a story she had for the gang under the roseapple tree. Then she remembered Ayako and Shigeo, with their blue-grey eyes, were part of the gang. All this knowledge couldn't be shared.

Grow up, she told herself. Can't you keep anything a secret? Then she recalled what the medicine man had said to her father. "Everywhere people praise you. They hold you in such high respect." Was her father a somebody, after all? Even stuck on a farm?

Father cares about people . . . he cares . . . was that the secret to being a somebody?

Ayako's and Shigeo's real father's wife — the **luna's** wife — was she a somebody? She cared enough about Mr. Itoga to keep Mrs. Itoga as her maid even after Ayako was born and she knew it was her husband's child. Then she cared enough about Mrs. Itoga to make it possible for Mrs. Itoga to keep her own children, even though she — the **luna's** wife — loved and wanted to keep the two children. She was indeed a somebody, and even today, almost 18 years later, she was respected by people who didn't even know her.

Being a somebody . . . why, one didn't need to be rich or famous. One should learn to care about others.

I want to be a somebody some day, Sachie thought. I want to think of and care about others, not only about myself. I wanted to gossip about Ayako and Shigeo, and I was thinking only about myself, how I would be listened to and questioned and made the center of attention. I wasn't even thinking about Ayako and Shigeo . . . I wasn't caring about them, when I like them so much.

Grow up, Sachie, grow up, she told herself as she fell asleep.

The next day, very early, Muraki-san came up the hill. Somehow he had found out the medicine man was at the Himeno house.

Disappointed at seeing a new man instead of Tanaka-san, he murmured, "I wonder if Tanaka-san left any message for me? My name is Muraki."

"Yes, he did. Tanaka-san said he heard of two women in Kona, and he asked me to investigate them for you when I get there. So next time I come I should have good news for you."

"When is that?"

"Why, July. Isn't that the usual time?"

"Yes, but . . . July is so far away . . . six months away . . ." Slowly Mr. Muraki walked down the hill.

Early in December, Pushi, the Himeno's grey cat, began entertaining suitors again. Late in the night, she would meow plaintively,

and Toki or Haruo would have to get up and chase her boy friends away.

Pushi was democratic. She associated with male cats indiscriminately, so that her kittens were sometimes black, sometimes mixed, sometimes grey.

She thrived on motherhood. How proud she was each time she gave birth to four or five wet kittens. Unlike the sneaky chickens, she wanted everyone, except Blackie the dog, to see and love her kittens.

However, Sachie's mother said Pushi would have to go. It was too much trouble trying to find a home for the many, many kittens. No one in Kakela wanted another cat; people in Fraserville didn't need cats.

So early one morning, they sat Pushi in the car and drove past the bus terminal which marked the end of Kakela, and far into the ranch lands. There they dropped Pushi together with some food, turned the car around, and drove home. Pushi watched them turn the curve, motionless.

Two or three miles later, they regretted what they had done.

"I'll talk to Mother. After all, Pushi keeps the shed free of rats. Pretty soon she'll be too old to have any more kittens."

They turned the car around and drove back to pick up Pushi. But Pushi had disappeared. Sachie thought she might be walking in the opposite direction, so they drove a few miles farther. But Pushi was nowhere to be seen.

Sadly they drove home, one eye open for Pushi. On the way, they stopped at the Itoga farm where Mrs. Itoga served them some soy beans boiled in salted water. Sachie loved soy beans and would pop the beans from their pod into her mouth almost endlessly, but today the beans didn't taste right. She felt empty. Pushi was gone.

When they finally reached home, who should be on the front porch waiting for them but Pushi herself. She had not only walked home miles and miles, but she had reached home ahead of them. Sachie grabbed her and hugged and kissed her.

But in a few months, again Pushi presented the Himenos with five kittens. That did it. As soon as the kittens were old enough to give away, Pushi must go. This time it was her mother who put Pushi in a burlap bag so she would lose her sense of direction, and Toki drove back to the ranch again. This time Pushi would never be able to find her way back home. By the time she crawled out of the burlap bag, the car would be gone.

When they reached home, they unconsciously looked for Pushi on the front porch. She wasn't there. But how could she? After all, they had come straight home this time.

Pushi did not come home that night, or the next, or the next. Every day, when Sachie came home from school, she would look to see if Pushi had come back during the day.

"She's in somebody's house," her mother said. "Cats are like that. They don't care who feeds them as long as someone does. They're different from dogs." But her mother often opened the kitchen door when something seemed to brush against it.

Fifteen days after they had dropped Pushi in the mountains, they heard a weak mewing at the door. They rushed to open it and found Pushi, so thin her bones pushed against her wet and straggly fur.

Such joy, such love, such gratitude she expressed to find her human beings again. She purred and purred, although her purr was weak. She rubbed against them, exuding love in every rub. There was no accusation, no denunciation of human behavior. She loved them and had found them again, and she was happy and grateful.

No one ever again said Pushi would have to go, although she soon started dating Gouveia's big one-eyed tomcat.

CHAPTER 5

JANUARY: THE GODS OF FORTUNE ARE BUSY GODS

"You have to give the gods an orange with a green leaf, to show it's fresh. You don't insult a god by giving him an old, shriveled orange."

New Year's Day was coming! Anyone could see that, the way the house was being cleaned. All over Kakela, in the Japanese homes, the cleaning was going on.

"The windows," Sachie's mother said. "Be sure they are clean."

"Why?"

"Why? Do you think the gods of Fortune have so much time they can go into every house? They might peek from the window. Just to see if they should stay in that house that year. If the windows are dirty, do you think they would stay?"

"Gads! We have only one God. Jesus. . ."

"Never mind right now how many gods we have. Hurry and clean the windows. There is still so much to do," her mother interrupted.

Sachie and Hanako took the windows one at a time, she on the inside and Hanako, on a ladder, on the outside.

"Here," Sachie would point to a smudge. Hanako would scrub the spot, then motion, "You." Sure enough, it was on her side. Funny, it always looked as if the smudge was on the other side.

"Scrub the walls and floor," her mother said.

"Why?"

"Why? Because if the walls and floor are dirty, do you think. . ."

"I know . . . I know . . . the gods of Fortune won't come in." Sachie scrubbed the walls and floor.

"Now the bathhouse!"

"You mean the gods inspect there too?"

The cement floor of the bathhouse had to be scrubbed with a stiff brush because of soap marks. When they took a bath, they always scrubbed themselves clean outside the tub, and in so doing, splashed soapsuds all over the place. Sachie had to scrub the walls and floor plus the washtray.

"Thank Heavens New Year comes only once a year," she muttered. She deepened the ditch from the spot where the bath water came gushing out of the wooden tub to the plum tree, some twenty feet away. Between the bathhouse and the plum tree grew parsley, watercress, rhubarb and **yomogi,** an herb they steamed and pounded into rice cakes to give them a delicate color and aroma. All the plants thrived on bathtub water, such as the calla lilies and irises that bordered the ditch. Even the eucalyptus trees, ten feet away, sighed in satisfaction with bathtub water.

While Sachie cleaned the bathhouse and Hanako the kitchen, Toki climbed to the roof and swept leaves and dirt from the roof and gutters. Haruo cleaned the garage. The boxes of potatoes, the tubs of pickled turnips, the bags of charcoal, the gallons of pickled scallions . . . all were stacked neatly along one wall so they would have room for the pounding of the **mochi,** the rice cakes. It was always safer to pound the **mochi** in the garage for one never knew when it might rain.

The Sunday before New Year's Day was always set aside for the pounding of the **mochi,** and the children were excused from attending

Japanese school. Every hand was needed at every Japanese home on this day.

The day before, her mother had washed and soaked the **mochi** rice, and now she steamed it in large square wooden boxes, two boxes at a time.

"The rice is ready," she called.

Haruo and Toki grabbed their heavy mallets. When the bottom box of steamed rice was emptied into the clean stone mortar, they started pounding in rhythm.

Plop-plop . . . plop-plop . . . plop-plop . . . one step out of rhythm and they would bang their mallets. One second too slow or too fast, and the mallet would crush Sachie's mother's hand, as she kneaded the rice between plops.

"It's about ready," she panted in about two minutes. Haruo and Toki slowed their pace gradually, and finally stopped. Her mother took the heavy, sticky mass from the mortar and rushed to a table in the kitchen, which had been dusted with a special kind of rice flour.

"Sachie, the plates for the **kazari-mochi**," she ordered. The first **mochi**, six to eight inches in diameter, went to the gods. Since there were several gods, spirits, and deities — including the Buddhist God in the living room, the Shinto spirit in the bedroom, the god of the sewing machine, of the car, of the stove and many others — it took several poundings before all the gods were taken care of.

"You really think there's a god or spirit in the car or stove?" Sachie asked her mother.

"Does it matter whether there is or isn't? Can't we thank it for running smoothly all year by giving it a token gift?"

"We're not even giving it," her father explained. "We're just recognizing it. In a few days or weeks we'll be eating the **mochi** ourselves."

"Well, it still makes us look silly," Sachie muttered. "Believing that all these things have spirits."

"Can you prove they don't have any?" her mother challenged.

The next batch of **mochi**, however, was for real human beings. Her mother cut the **mochi** dough into small pieces. Sachie and Hanako flattened each piece, filled it with cooked, mashed, sweetened bean paste, then shaped it into a flat disc. All of the discs she laid one by one on clean sheets of white paper dusted with rice flour.

"May I eat one now?"

"Yes, but take some to Father and your brothers first."

"Ah, **omochi**," her father said. "When I eat this, I'll be one year older. I hope I can eat **mochi** again next year."

After the mochi pounding came the decorating of the house. Toki and Haruo went into the hills to look for branches of feathery bamboo and dark green pine. But first they sneaked to the fresh-water pool for a quick swim. They emerged gasping, purple with goose pimples.

The pool, fed by icy water from Mauna Kea, was surrounded by yellow ginger, red ti leaf, wild taro and bananas, and in June and July the mountain apple trees close by were red with fruit. This was a favorite spot for the boys in Kakela so Sachie was forbidden to swim there. It didn't really matter since she couldn't swim, but she was resentful of still another "don't" in her life.

The bamboo and pine branches brought home were nailed to the front entrance of the house. Toki also collected fern fronds which they placed under the oranges offered the gods at this time. The oranges had to have part of the stem and a leaf or two attached.

"Why?" Sachie asked.

"You have to show the gods it's a fresh orange. The leaves of fresh oranges are green and shiny. That's how the gods can tell whether an orange is fresh or whether it's been around some time. We don't insult the gods by giving them old oranges, and by leaving a leaf on, they can tell at a glance whether the oranges are fresh or not."

"Gads! That's carrying it too far." What puzzled Sachie was that her brothers did not question her mother about these customs. She asked Haruo, "Just because we human beings look at the leaves to see whether an orange is fresh or not, is Mother saying the gods use the same methods? Doesn't that make the gods the same as human beings?"

"Or that human beings can only imagine the gods as being like themselves, only wiser and better," Haruo suggested.

"Our Christian God is not like that. He can do anything and everything, including miracles."

"That's another interpretation. . ."

"I think all this New Year jazz is silly. . ."

"Listen, Sachie, if you don't want to observe these customs, wait until after you're in your own home. Doing all this makes Mother happy. She's doing something she knows something about. And you know what? Don't be surprised if you continue doing many of the same things when you're on your own."

"Ho, ho, ho, wanna bet?" Sachie retorted.

New Year's Eve the cooking began in earnest.

When any dish was ready, Sachie carried it to the living room, where Toki and Haruo had set up a long table on wooden "horses." Ordinarily, the "horses" held up logs, but today they held up a table loaded with food, all artistically arranged. It seemed foolish having so much good food at one time, but the gods of Fortune . . . what fools the gods of Fortune were!

The living room contained, besides the long table and the Buddhist altar, her father's cherry tree. The tree, in reality only a feathery bamboo stripped of some of its long, slender leaves, was transformed into a fairylike creation with tiny strips of curlicued light pink paper, with pea-sized pink, white and yellow **mochi** balls, and with good-luck sayings. Resembling a cherry tree in bloom, it indicated early spring in Japan.

Just before midnight on New Year's Eve, her mother called, "Come, everyone. It's almost twelve o'clock. Come eat your **soba**. Drink all your worries down."

"I don't have any worries," Sachie said. **Soba** was tasteless. The dark buckwheat noodles were flavorless, even with chicken soup poured over it. "Do I have to?"

"Of course you have to. **Soba** stands for bad luck. Do you want to have bad luck this year?"

Everyone ate a bowl of **soba**. It was better than being reminded, all year long, that this or that wouldn't have happened if only one had eaten his **soba** on New Year's Eve. Besides, **soba** in Japanese meant "being at one's side." Eating **soba** guaranteed one would have friends and relatives around when they were needed.

When the clock struck twelve, everyone cheered, and Sachie's father said, "In Japan, the temple bells rang 108 times at midnight. We used to count them. How clearly they rang in the country air, with only the crickets not listening. Ah, how I miss those temple bells tonight."

As a substitute, Toki got out his rifle and fired a shot into the air. From across the valley someone returned the message. Happy New Year! the message said.

In the morning, the first person to get up started the bath fire, so they could all take another bath, clean as they were.

"Start the New Year clean physically, mentally, and financially," was the Japanese philosophy. All bills were paid before New Year's Eve, and this could often be done because the Japanese farmers paid cash for their purchases or else went without. Mentally, the mind was swept clean of petty jealousies, anger, and frustrations. This was a new year, and people were to begin new relationships. Physically, they were to be clean, hence another bath within the same twelve hours.

"Now for the **ozoni**," said her father.

Usually her father made the broth. He never cooked on any other day, but on New Year's Day, he made the broth to show the gods he could provide for his family under any circumstances. First he made a clear soup using dried shrimps, dried sea tangle and mushrooms. Into the soup went a can of clams — the only time they ate clams all year long. Into the soup also went some of the **mochi** they had pounded earlier, and then some spinach. Her mother scooped the **mochi** and soup into bowls, and they all ate as much as they possibly could. After all, they had to show the gods they could stuff themselves at this, the first meal of the year.

The first of their New Year's Day guests was Mr. Itoga. He was led to the table in the living room. Laid out were **sashimi**, the delicate pink raw fish sliced thin and placed on slivered turnips; **botamochi**, the rice ball covered with sweet bean paste; the **morimono**, which consisted of sliced oranges, fish cake, eggs cut in various shapes with a thread held between the teeth and the left hand, boiled shrimps, and grapes; **sushi**, rice rolled in seaweed; boiled octopus and squid with a soybean sauce; and fried chicken.

Of course a New Year's feast was not complete without **kuromame**, or black beans, for these promised good health; **kazunoko**, or fish eggs, which promised many children; and **konbu**, or sea tangle, which promised happiness. Health, happiness, and many children . . . what more could a Japanese family want?

Her father and Mr. Itoga toasted each other with **sake**, and Mr. Itoga was urged to eat. He praised the variety and beauty of the food, but ate little, trying not to disturb the artistry of the plates. For, after all, there would be many, many more guests that day.

In Kakela, on New Year's Day, the men visited each other's homes, but because of her father's age and the respect he commanded, he stayed home, and the men all came to visit him. Japanese women and girls could not go out to visit, at least not on New Year's Day.

Togo-san came next, Togo-san who had lost his daughter to some man in Japan. Togo-san was called stingy, as he ate mostly rice and pickled turnips, dried fish, and the vegetables he raised. Very seldom did he buy meat or fresh fish or canned goods at the stores. Yet it was known that for all the vegetables he sold, he had very little money in the bank. Haruo's friend Susumu, who worked in a bank, had said so once when people were gossiping about Togo-san being stingy and saving all his money in the bank.

"Togo-san has little money in the bank," Susumu said. Then he walked off angrily because he wasn't allowed to talk of bank matters to anyone. He had broken a rule because he wanted to protect Togo-san. So people now knew that Togo-san had little money in the bank, and they wondered what he did with his money, but at least they didn't call him stingy.

When next Blackie barked, it was Harry and Marlene. For years, Harry had come to the Himenos on New Year's Day, since he was their closest neighbor. This year he brought Marlene.

"Mr. Himeno, people wonder about us, but I'm happy. And I hope Marlene is, too."

"Of course I'm happy. Tell him I'm happy too," Marlene said. "And busy."

Harry laughed. "She thought eggs came from stores," he explained to Toki.

"How come Marlene can go visiting?" Sachie asked her mother.

"Harry is Portuguese," her mother answered.

It was close to lunch when Muraki-san came. Muraki-san was very nervous ever since Nishida-san, the medicine man, had promised to look up the two prospects in Kona. He could hardly wait till July, and he wanted to drive to Kona, but he had to depend on a go-between since that was the way things were done. Poor Muraki-san. Even Sachie's mother sometimes said, "Sachie, if you continue being such a tomboy, nobody's going to marry you. You may have to marry Muraki-san."

Her father scolded her mother, saying, "How can you say a thing like that? Laughing about poor Muraki-san. I'm ashamed of you."

"I'm sorry. I forgot," her mother said, with a rare twinkle in her eyes. "I remember when I was young, my mother used to tell me the same thing. 'Oharu,' she used to say, if you are a tomboy, you'll have to marry Saru-san.'"

"Ah, Saru-san," reminisced her father, laughing despite himself. "Didn't he look like his name? A monkey? See whom I saved you from?"

Such banter was so rare between her mother and father, Sachie was surprised. They looked young, for a change.

Muraki-san, when he came, was already quite drunk. And, after a few more cups of **sake,** he began to weep.

"Himeno-san, you cannot imagine what it's like, living in Hawaii all alone. In Japan, where I had a family, yes. Even if I was an extra mouth. At least someone grumbled if I ate more than three bowls of rice. But here in Hawaii, to be all alone . . . no one to talk to . . . no one to tell me, 'You're back,' or 'Come home early,' or 'You must be wet.' No one to care whether I live or die. . ."

"You have many friends who love you, Muraki-san."

"I know. And I'm grateful. But it's a different kind of companionship I want. It's someone with whom to share my life. It's someone to whom I can talk to at night when I'm scared. I don't care how ugly, how simple minded she is. We all need someone who belongs to us, to whom we can belong. Am I asking too much, Himeno-san? Is that too much to ask of God? Am I being unreasonable?"

Late in the afternoon, as they were about to clear the table, the Akinas drove up in Jimmy Sausage's car.

"Where's Solomon?" Sachie asked Roselani. Toki pinched Sachie. Now why wasn't she allowed to ask that?

"We have good news," Mrs. Akina said. Yet she looked lonely. "Roselani and Pualani are going to Honolulu. Their uncle, the one that visited us last summer, sent us money and told us he has jobs for the girls. He wants them right away for a hula troupe. They may visit San Francisco, Chicago, even New York."

The Akinas ate. They ate and ate and ate. Anyone could see why each one of the Akinas was over 140 pounds of shining mahogany. Only Jimmy Sausage, shy Jimmy, picked on his food.

When they left, Sachie said, "My, they sure can eat."

Her mother scolded her. "What a rude thing to say of guests." But she did add, "It's lucky they were the last ones."

New Year's Day was over. And there was no way yet of knowing whether the gods had chosen to stay there.

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Soon after New Year's Day, Hanako left for Hilo to attend school there. It would be safer, her father said, now that Bakka-man had noticed her and singled her out. They would say she went to a sick uncle's place to help. This way, Bakka-man could save face, for he almost always got what he wanted.

Sachie examined Hanako. What made her liked by people? True, she was pretty. She was fair, she had large brown eyes, and her hair had a curl to it. Good. But she was rather plump, unexciting, and not particularly bright. Bad. But then Hanako smiled, and Sachie guessed why everyone liked Hanako. She was like her name, "flower child." Her smile was innocent, loving, naive, trusting.

Although they were two years apart, Sachie felt closer to her older brothers than to Hanako, just as she felt closer to her father than to her mother. So when Hanako was driven to the train, she felt only envy, not loneliness, that Hanako was going to Hilo.

"Please write to me, Hanako," she asked.

"Of course I'll write to the family, no matter how busy I am," she answered.

"Couldn't you write to me sometimes, a special letter?"

"Why, what could I tell you that I couldn't tell the family?"

Definitely Hanako was not the girl Sachie would have married had she been a man. Hanako was too obedient, too practical, and not one to take chances.

Before the train left, she hugged Hanako tightly, not because she would miss her, but because she felt sorry for her sister.

CHAPTER 6

FEBRUARY: ARE THE PEOPLE BACK HOME NEEDY OR GREEDY?

"People went to work in the canefields even when their friends turned blue and died. We never knew whether we would be next because we didn't know what caused this death . . . maybe rat fleas . . ."

It was nice having a father who could read and write. One was able to eat store candy and cookies. And one learned about other families in Kakela.

Sachie's father could read and write Japanese. But many of the other fathers in Kakela could not, so when they received a letter or sent a letter to Japan, they had to go to either Himeno-san or Shimoda-san, who was related to the Buddhist priest in Fraserville. One liked to have the priest think one had a spotless and wealthy family in Japan, so Shimoda-san was second choice. There was no guarantee he would

not repeat something he had read in a letter to the priest, and that would be embarrassing. Himeno-san was known for not repeating anything he read or wrote in a letter.

This Sunday afternoon, when Blackie barked, Sachie knew someone was coming with a letter. The men came to have letters read only on Sundays, for weekdays and Saturdays were for work.

It was Togo-san. "**Hai, konnichiwa,**" he called, wiping his face with a big blue-checkered kerchief he usually wore around his neck.

"**Hai, konnichiwa,**" her father answered. "Come in, come in."

"This is **somatsuna,** not fit to pass your lips," Togo-san said, taking a box of cookies from his bag.

"Ah, what a rare treat. I haven't seen these for a long, long time," her father answered. He passed the cookies to Sachie, who took the box to the kitchen.

"It is nothing, really nothing," Togo-san insisted.

They talked about the weather — how it rained so much of the time in February and about the crops and which were selling well, and about the Japanese school teacher — how he was very good with the children. Finally, when Sachie brought tea in two teacups, Togo-san pulled out a letter.

"This is a bother, such a bother," he apologized. "But I got another letter from Japan, and I wonder if you would be so kind as to read it for me."

The letter had already been opened and was well crumpled. Her father took the letter and read swiftly. "Hummm," he said occasionally. Togo-san waited patiently, pulling his checkered kerchief from his neck and wiping his face, although the day was not hot. Then he began folding the kerchief into small and still smaller squares.

Finally her father said, "Your brother in Japan says they are all well, thanks to the gods. But they had some bad luck a few months ago. Your brother had to have a major operation and spent some time at a hospital. To pay off his debts, he would like to borrow some money for a few months until he is on his feet again. Otherwise, he might have to sell off part of the ancestral land to pay the debts, else the interest on a loan might gobble up all of the land."

"What? Again? Debts! Always debts! Every time he sends me a letter, in fact the only time he sends me letters, he asks for money. Never once did he say, 'When are you coming home to Japan, brother?' Never once did he send us mushrooms, or seaweed, the way other

relatives do. Always it is 'Will you lend us some money.' Himeno-san, I'm the younger brother. I came to Hawaii to earn money so I could buy my own farm. I have my farm but after these many years I have hardly any savings to my name. My wife and I eat rice and **miso** soup most of the time. I need some savings. What if I died first? What would happen to my wife?"

"Then don't send your brother the money, Togo-san. You need the money just as much as he does."

"But what if it's true? What if he did have to sell part of the ancestral land? We promised our father we would never do that. The Togo land has been ours for generations. Is it our generation that is going to sell one parcel, then another, and in the end there is nothing there? Ah, no, Himeno-san, I cannot take the chance. Who would take care of our ancestors' graves? I promised my father. But my brother . . . if he is lying . . . write him a letter from me, Himeno-san. Write to this brother and explain that even though we live in this land called Hawaii, everyone is not rich. Those who became rich went back to Japan, so the people there think we are all rich.

"Please explain to him that we immigrants first lived lives of slaves. When we reached here, we had no privacy in our rooms. We were overcrowded. We had no recreational facilities . . . all we could do was play cards.

"I didn't play cards. I took care of the bathhouse for extra money, tending the fire and scrubbing the bathhouse after everyone was through. I worked in the small plot of plantation land assigned us to raise vegetables after work. I went into the forest to get firewood on Sundays.

"On weekdays I got up at 4:30, ate, then walked miles to begin work by 6 o'clock. I had half an hour off for lunch, then it was work, work, work till 4:30. You worked in the plantation yourself, Himeno-san, so you know the hardships I went through.

"People remember the plague that took place in Waipahu, on the island of Oahu, and on Lanai Island, because so many people died at one time. But here, too, in Hawaii, people died. They turned blue or black, and they suffered so. We never knew whether we would be next, because we didn't know what caused it . . . maybe rat fleas, maybe some kind of insect bites.

"Scared as we were, we got up each morning to go to work, never

knowing if that day would be our last. We worked and worked and saved.

"When I got my picture bride, I moved to Kakela, after getting an OK from the plantation boss. I didn't want the single men on the plantation threatening my wife or forcing her to do things while I was at work. They . . . the single men . . . were worse than the plantation **lunas** where women were concerned. They . . . the single men . . . didn't want to bother with a wife or pay her passage from Japan, yet they tried to get women to wash their clothes, feed them, and give them other favors.

"But I got away from that by moving to Kakela. Here, everyone is so good to us. And although we lost our only daughter . . . our greatest misfortune . . . we have one another, and we have all of you as friends.

"But my brother in Japan . . . he can never understand . . . he cannot believe our hardships . . . because he hasn't been here. I used to send my mother money while she was alive, at great sacrifice. I used to send my mother money thinking . . . for her few more years, I want my mother to live in comfort. I couldn't see her, I couldn't even give her a cup of water, so I wanted her to live in comfort.

"When she died, I stopped sending money. I think my brother misses this money, because every letter of his is, 'Send me money or the land must be sold.'

"Oh, Himeno-san, how can I make him know the life we immigrants led? How can I make him sympathize with his own brother?

"But I will send the money. The land must not be sold. Never! Never! And tell him that if he is cheating me, the spirits of our ancestors will know, and he will have **bachi**, the revenge of the spirits. If he is lying, and is getting the money to buy drinks and to spend on women, he will receive his punishment from the gods sooner or later. Ah, first my daughter and now my brother."

After he left, his straw hat on his white head, his blue checkered kerchief around his neck, his clean denim clothes hanging loosely on his small, thin body, her father turned to Sachie.

"Why didn't you serve some of the cookies with the tea?" he demanded. "Couldn't you share them with Togo-san? Do you think he would buy cookies for himself?"

That night he told Sachie's mother, "Togo-san's brother will never write another letter to Hawaii begging for money."

"How do you know?"

"Because I'm going to lie to him. I'm going to say that although the money is being sent this time, the next time my wife and I . . . meaning Togo-san and his wife . . . will return to Japan to live with my brother's family on the ancestral land.

"I will say that my wife is an invalid, and surely his wife and children will be able to care for my wife. I will explain that we don't have enough money to hire a woman to take care of my wife and I myself being a man am unable to continue to do the hundred and one chores a chronically ill woman needs to have done, like emptying her bed pans.

"I will say I hope this will not inconvenience him or his family, but the money I have should go for the land and not my wife, as that is more important. So the next time he needs money, we will deliver it in person. We will exchange the money for services."

"How can you lie like that?" Sachie's mother protested.

"Well, it's a choice of my lying or of Togo-san being drained off periodically by his older brother. I'm going to lie to save a friend. Surely the gods will not penalize me for that. Bring me paper and a pen, Mother. I want to write this letter while I am still angry."

"What if the brother writes to invite Togo-san and his wife to come back to Japan and live with them?"

"No. That's unlikely. That's why I put visions of bedpans in his mind."

. . .

"How embarrassing it would be, having people read our letters," her mother said one night. "Maybe I should learn how to read and write English. What if our children were not here in Hawaii and I got a letter in English? Yes, I should learn English."

"Now Mother, it's not that easy. English is hard, compared to Japanese."

"Nonsense. If someone as stupid as Sachie can read, why can't I? Why, Sachie was reading when she was five and not even going to school. If she can learn, I'm sure I can. It can't be that hard. Sachie, what did you first learn when you went to school?"

Sachie thought and thought. What had she learned in the first grade? "I can't remember," she finally admitted.

"What? You can't remember what you learned only a few years ago? When your father can remember things that happened 60 years ago?"

"A B C. I learned A B C."

"Well, teach me A B C," her mother said, pencil poised.

"This is A, this is B, and this is C," Sachie said.

"A, B, C," her mother repeated, putting the Japanese characters above the letters. And then?

"Then we have D and E and F and G. . ."

"Wait. Give them to me three at a time. . ." She copied the whole alphabet down. "Then what did you learn?"

Sachie thought and thought. She knew she had learned a lot, but what would impress her mother? Then, for some strange reason, she remembered "The Friendly Cow."

"I learned this poem in first grade," she said. "It's by a man named Robert Louis Stevenson."

The friendly cow, all red and white,
I love with all my heart,
She gives me cream with all her might
To eat with apple tart.

"What does that mean?" her mother asked.

"Well, it says I liked the red and white cow because she gives me cream to eat with apple pie," Sachie translated.

"How silly. Any cow gives cream, or milk, so long as it's not a bull. Look at Gouveia's cows . . . they're black and white. Look at ours . . . we don't have a single red and white one. What has color to do with cream?"

"It's only a poem, Mother."

"Is that what you learn at English school? My, it's a good thing we send you to Japanese school where you can learn more important things. What did you learn in third grade?"

Again Sachie couldn't remember. She remembered Miss Field, who daily had given her cod liver oil and a slice of orange because Sachie had been so skinny. Miss Field had taught her arithmetic and spelling and reading and . . . "I know. I learned the Pledge of Allegiance."

"What's that?"

"Well, it goes like this." She placed her hand over her heart and rolled her eyes upward to an imaginary flag. "I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all."

"My, you sound like a white man, your English is so good."

"Really?" Sachie was flattered. To sound like a white man who lived in a big white house on the plantation and wore white suits was Sachie's dream. "Listen, Mother, we also learned this."

Dramatically she began, "Four score and seven years ago, our forefathers brought forth upon this continent a new nation, conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal. Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any other nation, so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure."

"**Maa**, it flows so well, although I don't know what you're saying or of what use it is."

"Not only that, we also learn to sit quietly and listen to the teacher. We have to eat neatly at lunch. If we forget our lunch, they sometimes give us a free lunch. Next year I'm going to learn how to cook and sew in a Home Economics class. And we learn to be kind to people and courteous to our elders and parents and obey . . . obey. . . ." She caught her father's eyes. "Well, anyway, we learn a lot of things in English school. And it's all free."

"Wonderful. Wonderful," her mother said. "Now, teach me how to write my name in English. I think that is very important."

So Sachie wrote Oharu Himeno boldly, with a dash instead of a dot above the "i" and ended by underlining the whole with a flourish. And ever after, when her tiny grey mother laboriously wrote her name in English, she dotted the Himeno with a bold dash and underlined the whole with a flourish, surprising people.

Also, it seemed to Sachie that her mother nagged her a little less about doing her Japanese school homework.

CHAPTER 7

MARCH: THERE'S A MARRIAGE IN THE FAMILY

"Maybe Japan should send all its chorinbo, its eta, to Hawaii and California. We wouldn't know or care if they were, and they wouldn't be chorinbo any more."

"**Oo-i, kita kita,** she's coming," Shimoda-san, who had been watching and listening from the top of the hill, called.

"She's coming, she's coming," the women repeated, rushing to the gate.

"Stand back . . . stand back . . . "Shimoda-san commanded. He was only five-foot-two, but when he commanded, the women obeyed.

In the kitchen, the helpers began warming the pints of **sake.** The girls, dressed in **kimonos** that smelled of camphor, rushed from kitchen to living room, carrying platters of **sushi, sashimi, tempura,**

umani and fried chicken. The tables, set on "horses," were covered with white paper. At every five feet of table there was a red fish decorated with vegetable flowers.

"This is an elaborate wedding," one of the women in the kitchen whispered to another. "How can the Himenos afford it?"

"And the girl is from Hilo, not Kakela or Fraserville or from the plantations. Maybe she'll be a 'high collar.' "

"I doubt it. If she's the 'high collar' type, she wouldn't come here to a homestead."

"Strange, isn't it? But it's nice to have a wedding in Kakela. We haven't had one for so long . . . by the way, were you a picture bride or were you married in Japan before your husband came to Hawaii?"

"A picture bride. How about you?"

"A picture bride too. Do you remember how you felt when you docked? We had to go to the Kakaako Compound and the officials examined us like we were cows. They looked at our eyes, our ears, and down our throat."

"And do you remember all the men lining up to claim their brides? I looked at that line and wondered which one was going to be my husband."

The other woman laughed. "The picture and the man never matched. They sent a picture of when they were young or a retouched picture or a picture of a more handsome man."

"Isn't that true! There were some good-looking men in the line and I thought maybe one of them would be my husband, but when they called my name and his name, he turned out so homely."

"Mine too. But he's a good man, and that's important."

"It sure is. Do you know what some of the good-looking men did? They sold their wives to other men for more than the cost of sending for a wife. Sometimes they got $100, sometimes $200 extra."

"Why would anyone want a second-hand wife?"

"To save time and worry. A woman in Hawaii was a sure thing. A man could see her and know that she was OK. Getting a picture bride is taking a chance. The girls had their pictures retouched too, you know."

"I suppose so. I selected my best picture, I remember. It didn't look too much like me."

"The good-looking men also sent their wives out for prostitution, I heard. Then they . . . the men . . . wouldn't have to work in the fields, in the sun and the rain. Conceited things!"

"Well, we sure were lucky, weren't we?"

"Faster, faster," Shimoda-san's voice thundered. "And less talking. There's hardly any **sake** on the tables."

The women put their memories away and poured **sake** from the kettle into the little containers.

Sachie and Arlene, who had been perched on the veranda railing counting the bags of rice which lay piled on one side of the porch, slid off and hurried down the steps. They had wanted to go down the road to see the bride come in, but they had also wanted to watch the men eat, sing, and drink. Although it was Toki, Sachie's own brother, getting married, Sachie had no special job. She was supposed to wear a **kimono** and help the girls with the serving of the **sake**, but the woman who dressed the girls said, tactfully, "She's a little too thin to wear a **kimono** now, but in a few years she'll fill out, and then she'll be a beauty." Sachie was half-insulted, half-glad.

"We have 23 bags of rice," she said.

"Is that good?"

"Of course that's good. That means we have lots of good friends. Good friends give a hundred-pound bag of rice; just friends give money. See, this bag is from your father. Here's one from poor Muraki-san, and one from Mr. Higa, and even one from Mr. Togo. Rice is food, and giving rice means you are wishing the new couple will never want for food."

At the gate, Shimoda-san was shouting orders and loving it, for he repeated them again and again, even though everyone had obeyed him the first time. "They're almost here. Keep the path clear. Hold the lanterns high. Start clapping as soon as you see her, those of you who don't have lanterns . . . **oi**, Sachie, where do you think you're going?"

Skirting him, Sachie and Arlene ran down the hill, their pigtails flying behind them. Neighbors, carrying kerosene lanterns — **sage-lampu**, they were called — lighted the road as far down as the fourth bend to Fraserville. There was a muted hum among the people lining the road. Crickets chirped in accompaniment. Overhead, the eucalyptus trees mumured in gentle liquid whispers.

The clear notes of two bamboo flutes echoed around the bend. Then, after a few minutes, from the soft darkness around the fifth turn, came the palanquin, draped in filmy silk and lighted by a single gas lantern. The four men who shouldered the palanquin were draped around their hips and turbaned around their foreheads, but otherwise they were

naked. Perspiration dripped from their bodies for they had carried the heavy palanquin all the way from Fraserville.

The bride swayed in tune to the leader's chants. She was visible through the transparent white silk, as though through a light mist, and she reminded Sachie of some poetry she had read. Elaine the Fair, Elaine the Beautiful, Elaine the Lily Maid of Astolat . . . yes, this bride was just like the picture of Elaine the Fair. Pride and awe flowed through Sachie, as she realized that this beautiful being was to be her sister-in-law and live in her home. Imagine, and this beautiful girl's mother had actually begged Sachie's mother to take Chiseko-san for a daughter-in-law.

"A boy like Toki — good to his parents, courteous to his elders, hard-working, knowledgeable, kind, gentle — a boy like that is getting hard to find. We know you parents must be good to raise such a boy, and we know we will never have to worry about our daughter Chiseko if she were married to a boy like Toki-san." The girl's family hadn't minded that they were much richer than the Himeno family.

Sachie admired the white silk **kimono** the bride wore, the heavy **obi** embroidered with gold and silver threads, the narrow white band around the elaborate hairdo, the shining trinkets that twinkled and danced in her hair. Oh, but this bride was the most beautiful girl in all Kakela and Fraserville.

Remorse suddenly hit her. The Itogas had been hoping Toki would marry their Ayako, who would graduate from high school in June. Sachie had been sure he would, and her mother and father had discussed it too. It was almost an understood thing, but then a man from Fraserville had begged Sachie's mother for a **miai**, a meeting.

"Just see her once, and then you can refuse," the matchmaker had insisted. "You can say no the next day, and you don't even need a reason. But I promised to arrange a meeting, and if I can't manage it, I will lose face."

"Are you sure her family is not **kusare**?" her mother demanded. "Else why would a rich family from Hilo want to marry into a poor family from Kakela? And how did they hear about Toki?"

"I told you the reason why," the matchmaker explained again. "This girl's mother is related to Nakamura, the photographer in Fraserville. When the mother came to Fraserville a few months ago, she heard about Toki-san and she managed to take a look at him when he was in

town. She was deeply impressed, and when she went back, she talked to her daughter. It took all this while for the girl to consent to the meeting. She doesn't want to get married yet."

"They must be **kusare**," Sachie's mother still insisted.

"I tell you, they are not **kusare**, not leprous. In fact, they asked me first of all, even before I spoke to you, to check to see that your family does not have a **kusare** strain somewhere. I told them that you were clean. I always matchmake only those who come from good, clean families."

"What about **chorinbo**? The **eta**? The **buraku**? Did you investigate that?"

"Of course I did. I investigated them and I investigated your family. I have to be fair to both families."

Once Sachie had asked her mother what a **chorinbo** was, since her mother said she must never marry a **chorinbo**.

"I really don't know," her mother had admitted. "My mother didn't know either, because I asked her the same question. All she knew was that in small villages and in the country **chorinbo** did dirty work, like killing animals, repairing shoes, and burning the dead."

"That's kind of silly. Here, we all kill animals, even Toki and Haruo. They kill chickens. And people don't burn their dead since we now have a funeral parlor in Fraserville. And as for shoes, Mr. Maderios repairs shoes but he's not a **chorinbo**. He's Portuguese."

"Things are different here, Sachie."

"Then why don't we act differently, instead of acting as if we were in Japan? Maybe Japan should send all its **chorinbo** to Hawaii and California. We wouldn't know or care if they were, and they wouldn't be **chorinbo** any more. Maybe we are **chorinbo**, or the Itogas, and we don't know it."

"No," her mother said. "We don't act like **chorinbos**. We are too proud. Maybe, after all, it's the way we act — head high, no matter how poor we are — that distingushes us from a **chorinbo**. A **chorinbo** knows he's a **chorinbo**, and he acts that way."

"If that's true, and I was the daughter of a **chorinbo**, I'd hold my head higher than others, just to show I can be just as good as anyone else."

"Yes, that's possible here in Hawaii, especially if one changes one's name. That's the beauty of living in America. One can start from nothing and be something."

She hesitated, then said, "But inside of you, you would still know you

came from **chorinbo** parents, and somehow you might show resentment, even hatred, toward others. There are enough problems in life without being married to a man who might hate others for a vague reason. That is why I warn my children not to marry **chorinbo**. Your grandchildren or great-grandchildren, yes, but not you, or your children."

It seemed quite logical to Sachie, for once. Her mother made sense. She, Sachie, would never tell her own children about **chorinbo**, and this long history of unfair prejudice would be lost.

So Toki met the girl who was not **kusare**, or leprous, or a **chorinbo**, whatever that was. Strangely, at the very first meeting, they liked each other, and Sachie's mother liked Chiseko-san. Toki and Chiseko-san met a few more times, and surprisingly soon the exchange of gifts between bride and groom took place. A good day for the wedding was selected. It fell in March.

"Sachie, why does she wear that white band around her head?" Arlene asked.

"To hide her horns . . . not real horns, stupid," Sachie said, when she saw the shock on Arlene's face. "That's just an expression, a custom. Mother says the horns stand for faults and brides wear the band to hide their faults. But I don't think Chiseko-nesan has any faults."

As they passed the neighbors, Sachie heard one of them say, "My, what a beautiful girl. But she looks pale. Now, why would someone like that from Hilo marry someone in Kakela, even though Toki-san is such a good boy? I feel sorry for the Himeno family. They will have a burden on their hands."

"So none of your business," Sachie wanted to say, but she knew the neighbor was really concerned for the Himenos. Anyway, she couldn't say anything sassy or sarcastic, for her mother had told her, "Spit three times before you say something sassy." The only problem was, Sachie was not to spit. That was unladylike.

Back at the house, Sachie pointed out the **tansu**. "See this?" She fondled the smooth dark wood of the Japanese bureau lovingly. "Well, this drawer has nothing but Japanese **kimonos**. Chiseko-san has all kinds, all brought from Japan. And this drawer? It has sheets, pillowcases, towels . . . all from the store!"

The Himeno sheets were made by joining bleached ricebags, and the kitchen towels were bleached chicken feed bags. "And this drawer . . ." she paused dramatically, "has silk slips and panties."

"Honest?" Both Sachie and Arlene wore nothing but sturdy slips and panties made from bleached rice bags, and had thought nothing of it, since they had believed everyone did the same. Then a Fraserville girl showed them her silk panties in the gym one day. Ever since, a great dream of both Sachie and Arlene was to own a pair of silk panties. Now maybe Sachie would be able to have one. Chiseko-san might share one with her.

"And see this blanket? Silk covering!"

"Gee! Do you think they will use it? Or do they have to keep it stored somewhere?"

"Use it," Sachie lied. She knew her mother would not approve of the family sleeping under silk. It was too good. The blanket would be taken out for nights when the Japanese school teacher stayed over.

"Sachie, tell the women in the kitchen we want more warm **sake,**" Shimoda-san called out. "And keep it coming."

"Why do people have to drink?" Sachie mumured half to herself.

"My father drinks, but he never gets drunk like Johnny Freeman," Arlene said. "He drinks mostly at night. **Yake-sake,** he calls it. Sometimes he gets up in the middle of the night, and then my mother has to get up and make tea for him and talk to him. Sometimes he cries, but my mother never scolds him. He drinks **yake-sake** mostly at night."

"What's **yake-sake**?" Sachie asked.

"It's when you can't do anything about it," Arlene explained proudly. Usually, Arlene was the one asking the questions. Now she was the one to explain.

"When we raise a lot of vegetables and people don't buy them and we have to plow them back into the field, my father drinks **yake-sake.** When people buy vegetables and don't pay us and we have to go again and again to the same house to beg for the money they owe us, my father drinks **yake-sake**. But mostly father drinks **yake-sake** about something that happened a long time ago, something that happened before I was born."

"What happened before you were born?"

"How should I know? I wasn't born then," Arlene said, laughing.

The men in the living room were laughing and talking and drinking. Only poor Muraki-san, sitting in a corner, looked sad as he drank

quietly. Across the table sat Higa-san, Jerry's father, who was Japanese but not truly Japanese, being Okinawan. He accepted the foot of the table, whereas Shimoda-san, because he was related to the priest in Fraserville, sat at the head. Yet Sachie knew her father liked Higa-san better than Shimoda-san, for when he received something from Japan, like seaweed or mushrooms, he shared it with Itoga-san, Togo-san, Muraki-san and Higa-san. Never once had he shared anything with Shimoda-san.

No one had seated Shimoda-san at the head of the table, and no one had told Higa-san to sit at the far end of the table. They just seemed to know where to sit.

"Pooh to that!" Sachie said silently. Then, aloud, "Where's Ayako? I don't see her around."

"She was helping serve **sake**. Where did she go?"

Together, Arlene and Sachie walked down the steps and circled the yard. Ayako was not around. Then they walked into the garage, and there, sitting in the car, Haruo on one side and Ayako in her Japanese **kimono** in the other, were the two. Sachie and Arlene slipped behind the car to listen. Perhaps, they whispered to each other, Haruo would kiss Ayako.

"We have to," Haruo was saying. "We have to start. Someone has to start. Otherwise we'll have nothing but labor jobs all our lives. Bookkeeping, maybe in a store, and office boy, but nothing higher. No, we have to go to college."

"But I'm a girl."

"So what? You could be a teacher and help other Kakela children. You could show the other Kakela and Fraserville girls that they needn't get married as soon as they turn 17. Or even 16 and 15."

"You don't know how hard it was to persuade my parents to send me through high school. They said I was a girl. How can I ask them to send me to college?"

"I don't know. I wish I knew. It's hard, especially since you're the oldest. Seems to me the oldest always has to make sacrifices."

"My parents wanted me to marry Toki if your parents asked for me."

"I know."

"I like Toki as a person but . . ."

"I'm glad Toki married someone else."

"Do you think you'll get to go to college someday?"

"I don't think. I know. Toki knows how I feel, and we're both saying so

that I can go. The Japanese in Honolulu are sending their children to college. Just because we live on farms, on another island, why can't we go too? Why should we work on a farm all our lives? To my father, a farm means everything. That was his dream, to own a farm. But to me, well, I feel I don't belong on a farm all my life. Toki likes it. He likes the independence. But for me . . ."

Sachie and Arlene crept away. Haruo and Ayako were not in the least bit romantic. What they didn't know was that, across the truck seat, Haruo and Ayako were holding hands.

* * *

"Sachie, Sachie, wake up. You'll be late for Sunday school."

Sachie opened one eye, puzzled. Usually her mother just yanked the covers off unceremoniously. Then she realized that they had had guests for the night. Arlene was one of them.

"Where's Arlene?"

"She's already in the kitchen."

When Sachie entered the kitchen, she found Arlene had already had breakfast, and was washing the breakfast dishes. Arlene straightened the slippers before the living room door, folded the blankets in the bedroom, and thanked the Himenos before she left. Sachie heard the other adult guests praising Arlene. Sachie decided not to help Arlene with her English homework for a week to get even with her. Sachie's mother was sure to say, "What a ladylike girl Arlene is. And so thoughtful, too. Now why can't you be like Arlene?"

On the way to Japanese school, she suggested to Arlene, "Let's pick some cherries."

"No, we'll get wet. And it's late. **Sensei** won't like it if we're late."

It was true. Although the bright red-rigid fruit looked inviting, the surinam cherry tree was heavy with dew. And, too, **Sensei,** the Japanese school teacher, didn't like it when students were late. It implied that they didn't like school and didn't respect him as a teacher.

"Besides, I don't want to spoil my record," Arlene said. Again, it was true. In English school, Sachie had the best grades and was the teachers' favorite because she always had her homework done promptly and correctly. But in Japanese school, Sachie was one of the dumb ones, and Arlene outshone her. Also, Arlene always won attendance certificates. Each year, on **Tenchosetsu,** the Emperor's birthday, the teacher passed out certificates for scholarship and attendance.

Arlene wasn't smart enough to win the certificates for scholarship, but she did collect attendance certificates. She attended Japanese school, which was held only on Sundays, whether she had a cold, a stomachache, fever, or measles. Once she gave measles to thirty students, but she made it to Japanese school.

They passed the wooden bridge. Sachie could smell the ginger in the gulch below. She wished she could pick some of the fragrant ginger. A girl, Shizuko, in the ninth grade, was allergic to ginger, and when Sachie sneaked some in, Shizuko's nose would run and run. It was fun watching Shizuko. But with Arlene there, it was no use. She would tell Shizuko what Sachie was up to. Arlene was like Hanako, Sachie's sister — good, but dull.

When they reached the Japanese school, which was only a large room built over someone's warehouse, the students were beginning to line up. Sachie and Arlene ran to their places.

First, the students made two straight lines. When the lines passed inspection, the teacher called out, "**Keirei!**" The students all bowed. "**Ma-e susume!**" At this forward march command, they all filed quietly into the room.

The next thing they did was call **chinmoku**. During this three-minute period, everyone put his head on the table and rested. **Sensei** padded up and down the aisles, a coffee rod in one hand. **Chinmoku,** which meant silence, was a period of relaxation, a period between play and action to quiet and concentration. Talking during **chinmoku** was unforgivable, chiefly because the talker disturbed the other students. **Chinmoku** was a time to become receptive to the new learning that would follow, and even the six-year-olds kept their eyes and mouths closed for three minutes.

Today, however, Sachie was thinking of describing **Sensei** for an English composition for her English class, and she couldn't quite remember whether he had a mole on his left cheek or his right. Otherwise she could picture him clearly. He was tall, tanned, muscular. His thick black hair was plastered down with brilliantine. The short hair right above his ears stuck out like porcupine quills. His teeth were large and square, a little too large for his mouth or face, but very white and clean. His eyes were black, and the white part was very white. With those eyes, he could see all over the room, at all nine grades, in one glance. His aim was perfect, and when he threw an eraser at a student who was disturbing others, it landed where he wanted it to land.

Sachie knew all this, but she couldn't remember where the mole was, although it didn't make too much difference.

She decided to peek. Slowly, very slowly, she maneuvered her head so that it was turned toward the aisle. Then, quickly, she opened one eye for a second's glance, only to find **Sensei's** eyes on her. She was so surprised she lifted her head and opened both eyes. Then she remembered this was **chinmoku** time, and she could expect a sharp prod on her back with the coffee rod.

She waited. Nothing happened. Slowly she opened her eyes again. **Sensei** looked at her, shook his head and smiled. Puzzled, Sachie closed her eyes. She had broken a rule. Why hadn't **Sensei** punished her?

"**Sensei** is handsome," Arlene whispered during the copying of assignments. Since there were nine grades in the same room with only one teacher, it was necessary that each grade copy the assignment for their grade and work independently much of the time. Right now, the teacher was busy with the first grade students.

"**Akai tori, kotori, naze naze akai,**" the first graders read in unison at the top of their lungs. "Red bird, little bird, why, why are you red?" Silly statement, thought Sachie. Like asking, "Blue sky, blue sky, why, why are you blue?" or "Green grass, green grass, why, why are you green?"

To her surprise, the teacher encouraged this. "What other poems can we make that asks the same question?"

One first grader raised his hand. **"Kuroi tori, kotori, naze, naze kuroi?"** "Black bird, little bird, why, why are you black?" The students in the other grades giggled as they copied their assignments. "Good," the teacher said. "Now, how about someone else?"

"Shiroi hana, kohana, naza, naze shiroi?" "White flower, little flower, why, why are you white?"

"Very good," the teacher praised. "Now I want to see how many poems you can write before I come back to you. Notice one of you changed the color. The next person changed the color and the item. What else can you think about changing? Be sure to write neatly." He checked to see that each first grader had pencil and paper, then moved to the second graders.

Calligraphy period, just before lunch, was Sachie's favorite. Usually one of the ninth grade girls would be sent to the storeroom downstairs for the camel's hair brushes, the ink-sticks, the trays in which to grind the sticks, the water, the rice paper on which they would write the

Japanese characters. Everyone could talk then, for calligraphy depended on a steady hand, not a closed mouth. However, because concentration was needed, few people talked.

Today, to her surprise, Teacher gave her the key to the storeroom. As she left, she saw a girl nudge another. She felt uncomfortable. She liked the teacher and had a crush on him, just as the other girls did. However, she didn't want him to like her. She wasn't ready for that, yet.

"How come the teacher asked you to go for the supplies?" Even Arlene had noticed.

Then, when the teacher praised her calligraphy and selected one of her characters to be posted on the wall, Sachie became even more uncomfortable. She looked at the teacher again. He had had a haircut. The brilliantine in his hair shone in white dots above his neck. His teeth and his hands were too square and too large. She wondered why she had ever had a crush on him.

At 2:30, when it was time to leave, he said, "Sachie, wait for me. I'm going to walk home with you." Sachie was frightened.

But then the teacher added, "I wasn't able to make it to Toki-san's wedding last night as I had to go to Hilo, so I'm going to congratulate him today. I'm sure it was a very happy occasion."

So that was it. **Sensei** was merely being polite because he was having supper with her family tonight. Sachie was relieved, and when she looked at the teacher again, she found him very good-looking.

The wedding celebration was almost over. It had been an exciting weekend. And, as Sachie walked home with **Sensei**, she told him about the 23 bags of rice they had received, how poor Muraki-san had cried, how Chiseko-san had changed **kimonos** three times — from a white to a black to a red — what **yake-sake** meant, and that **Sensei** must never marry a **chorinbo**.

"And what's that?" he asked.

"I don't really know. My mother doesn't know, and her mother didn't know. The only thing we know is that we shouldn't marry one. But it's hard because we don't know who they are or what they look like. If I found one, I'd marry him, just to show that there's nothing wrong with them."

The teacher sighed. The rest of the time he walked carefully so that the stones wouldn't ruin his good pair of shoes.

* * *

CHAPTER 8

APRIL: TRY TALKING TO TREES, SOMETIMES

"When you act, you must consider what might happen to others, too. Remember, you have the opportunity to make choices."

One sunny day in April, a man came to talk to the students of Fraserville Elementary and High School. The younger children went to the first assembly; the junior and senior high school students went to the second. It was called Arbor Day Assembly.

"Trees are very important," a plump man in a gray suit said, as he wiped his face with a very white handkerchief. The handkerchief remained white. "Unless we plant grass and trees all the time, our soil will wash away into the ocean. Something called erosion takes place."

Sachie knew that. The road at home going to the fields was not

paved. Every time there was a big rain, the water came gushing down in a muddy stream, so that the road grew deeper and deeper until finally large stones were exposed.

"When the soil washes away, the land will be full of rocks," the man said. Sachie nodded her head in agreement. The man, seeing her nod, looked pleased.

To prevent the land from becoming nothing but rocks, the man was going to give each of them a tree, just as he was going to give a tree to the school that day. They must promise to plant the trees at home. They would be helping to stop erosion. The teacher would help them select the tree they wanted.

They were all herded to the front yard, where Mr. Higgins, Laurie's father who was principal, was to plant the tree. The school janitor, Mr. Andrade, had already dug a deep hole, and a pile of dirt was on one side. Mr. Higgins took a strong, healthy-looking tree about three feet tall, placed it in the hole, and shoveled in three spadesful of dirt. Everyone clapped. The tree planting ceremony was over. They trooped to the gym where the plants were, leaving Mr. Andrade to shovel the rest of the dirt. Mr. Andrade's handkerchief was very dirty, Sachie noticed. And no one clapped when Mr. Andrade filled in shovel after shovel of dirt and stamped around the tree.

Sachie wondered how she was going to take a three-foot tree home on the bus, especially since everyone else would have a tree too. But when she reached the gym, she saw that the trees they were to have were about three inches high. She chose one with the fancy name of **ulmus crassifolia** — cedar elm, it said in parenthesis. And when she got home, her father planted the tree for her. Of course he had to chop down several guava bushes on their fertile land to make room for it. Trees grew wild in Kakela, unless the farmers kept constant watch.

For several weeks, Sachie visited the **ulmus crassifolia** daily, but then she forgot all about it. The next time she went to look, she saw it had died, and fighting to take its place were guava, roseapple and loquat trees. The guavas won.

"My tree died," she announced that night. Everyone knew which one "my tree" was.

"Maybe you didn't water it enough," Toki suggested.

"Or maybe the root system wasn't developed enough," Haruo said. "It was a pretty small tree."

"Maybe it didn't want to grow here, with all the pushy guavas and roseapples," her mother said. "Plants, like people, like to be with their own kind, in their own habitat. How lonesome it would be, had it grown, the only tree of its kind here on our farm."

A tree that preferred to die rather than live by itself? Sachie was going to laugh, but her father said, "Yes, you have to be a fighter to grow on strange new soil. Feeling lonely . . . wanting to be with your own kind . . . that's for weaklings. I think the tree didn't try very hard to live."

It was funny about trees. They were almost like human beings.

Take the avocado tree in the front yard, the pear tree, they called it. It towered above the house and spread its branches all over the yard. It was twice the size of the avocado tree in Yamada's yard, yet there wasn't a single avocado on the Himeno tree.

The medicine man told them the reason. "You have to scare it," he explained. "Cut some of its bark off. Not too much or it'll die. Then call out 'Will you bear fruit or won't you?' Someone has to say, 'I will, I will.' Then you say, 'All right, if you promise to bear fruit this year, we'll let you live. Otherwise, next year it's firewood for you.' "

So her mother chipped some of the bark off. "Haruo, you be the tree."

"Not me," Haruo said. "I helped you peel the bark off. Ask Hanako."

"Not me," even Hanako said.

"I'll be the tree," Toki volunteered, when he saw his mother's disappointment. He answered, "I will, I will, I will," when his mother asked the tree if it would bear fruit. Then his mother smeared rice gruel over the naked part of the tree, rewarding the tree for promising to be good.

The amazing thing was that the tree, which had never borne fruit before, was loaded with huge, meaty avocados the following year.

"See," said Sachie's mother. "You can't laugh at what the old people used to do."

"Why didn't I think of that?" Haruo muttered. "I could have girdled the tree a long time ago." However, he didn't say anything in front of his mother. And his mother talked to the trees, sometimes scolding them, sometimes praising them, even patting them and telling them what good little trees they were.

Kakela had many different types of fruit trees. The farmers planted every seed they had, hoping some would grow.

One tree the people in Kakela envied was a tangerine tree in the Yamada yard. The fruit from this tree did not have any seeds, strangely, so Mrs. Yamada gave of the fruit freely. However, she wouldn't allow anyone to take cuttings from it. People offered to pay her; they offered other rare trees in return. But no, Mrs. Yamada would not allow anyone to touch her tree. She wouldn't even go to the hospital when she was ill, for fear someone would take a cutting from her tree. Her family wasn't the richest in Kakela, her children weren't the brightest, but she was the only one with a tangerine tree. So she guarded the tree, tying her dog near it. And the tree squatted proudly, her shiny green tangerines twinkling in the sun. It looked like a squat, fat lady with emeralds all over her.

Sachie's father's favorite tree was a pine tree, dark green and straight. Other people twisted and shaped their trees to resemble the gnarled pines of Japan, but her father refused to shape his.

"Let it grow straight and tall. Why should they look like the Japan trees? Our children are not like the children in Japan, despite our teaching them Japanese ways."

Another favorite of the Himenos was the lemon tree with the large, juicy fruit with thick rough rind. The juice was used for lemonade and for salads; the rind could be soaked in sugared water and dried, making a sort of candy. But it was the leaves that delighted her father.

When they received a package of barley flour from Japan, Sachie's father would say, "Sachie, run and get me some lemon leaves."

Sachie would know exactly what kind to get. Not too old, for then they had no fragrance. Not too young, for the leaves were not sturdy enough. The just-right leaf would be pinched to bring out a tangy delicate fragrance, and then would be used instead of a teaspoon to eat the sweetened barley flour.

The most popular tree in the Himeno yard was the apple tree behind the garage. There were five apple trees and they all looked alike, but this one apple tree was the favorite of all the chickens. Each night they flew up and fought for their place, pushing others off, pecking, and demanding their own spot. Each night there was noisy squawking, and always, the order must be the same. Even when it rained, and Reddy, the trusting hen, wisely slept in the garage to keep dry, the other hens fought to sleep on the right branch of the right tree. They acted almost

as if their lives or reputations depended upon their having the right order — the customary order — every night.

Different trees stood for different qualities.

"Try to be like the bamboo," her mother would say. "The bamboo bends. Heavy rains, wind storms — notice the bamboo bends and doesn't break. Be willing to bend, and some day you'll be growing straight and useful. Remember the bamboo is useful. It can be used for many things — vases, dishes, poles, food. You too must live a useful life, or there isn't any purpose for living."

"What about the pine?" Bamboo and pine were always used together to decorate the house on New Year's Day.

"The pine is strong and can live in any kind of environment," her mother explained. "In Japan, on a rocky island five feet by two feet, you'll find five or six pines growing. Take the windblown cliffs. You'll find pines there. They'll be bent over, often, like an old farm lady, but they'll still be hanging on, growing a little each spring and summer, when the winds aren't too strong."

Sachie had always thought of pine trees as being picturesque. Now she saw them as trees that wouldn't give up.

It would have made the plump man with the white handkerchief — the man who had spoken at Fraserville School on Arbor day — happy to see the number of trees on the Himeno farm. For at Kakela, the soil — the soil that was not to be washed off to the ocean — welcomed and nurtured native and immigrant trees alike, but only if they had the strength to survive. So avocado, apple, lemon and orange trees had to compete with guava, eucalyptus and **lehua** trees for space and nourishment. Of course some trees were just plain lucky, like the apple tree that was singled out by the chickens to roost on. It had so much nourishment, other trees sent their roots toward it, and the emerging pink-tipped shoots looked like little children with rosy cheeks begging for candy.

How much like human beings trees were, even to groveling for favors.

In April, almost the end of the school year, Sachie fell in love.

It was with her science teacher. His name was Mr. Honda, and he was one of the few Japanese who had graduated from college and

become a teacher. Day after day Sachie had sat in his class, and he was just another teacher.

Then, one day, as he collected test papers, he said, "Take your time but hurry up." Sachie giggled. She saved the saying to use at home. She savored the sentence. "Take your time but hurry up." When could she spring it on her brothers for greatest impact?

When the students protested, saying they needed more time, Mr. Honda said, "You can talk, but do it with your mouth shut."

That was when Sachie fell in love.

Falling in love with a teacher meant falling in love with the subject. She suddenly loved science. She read her textbook thoroughly. The universe in motion, forms and makeup of matter, animal and plant life, health — all these became important. She even knew what page the picture of the globigerina was on, besides what it was. And when Mr. Honda asked for insects, she happily brought a jar full of orange-black Monarchs and Viceroys, cabbage flies, sowbugs and ladybugs — she who in the past wouldn't allow others to net the Monarchs and Viceroys.

She joined the Science Club. She volunteered for messy, smelly experiments. She raised her hand when a note had to be taken to the office which was in an adjoining building, and she often got caught in a drizzle going and returning. She took the Book Club count. She offered to do extra monitor duty, which meant sweeping the room and scrubbing the sink, even giving up her precious library visits to do this. She pestered Mr. Honda with questions she already had answers to, and added to the information he gave her. She made a pest of herself, and ignored his sighs when she raised her hand again and again.

"Sachie, you're not spending enough time on your English assignments. They're hastily done or they're late. What's wrong?" Miss Case, the English teacher, was concerned.

Who cared about English? Prepositional phrases, infinitives, adjective clauses. No one would ever stop her on the street and ask her what a prepositional phrase was. But science! Science was the most useful subject in school. She studied the constellations at night and borrowed books on chemistry instead of on travel.

One night, Haruo drove to Fraserville to pick up a bag of rice. Since Sachie had done her homework, she was allowed to go with him. While Haruo was busy in the store, Sachie wandered idly about. Suddenly she noticed Mr. Honda's car parked in the shadow of the huge

banyan next to the bank. It blended with the darkness, and Sachie almost missed seeing it.

To touch his car was like touching Mr. Honda, which she couldn't and wouldn't do. So she crossed the street and walked to his car. She was just about to reach into the front seat and caress the upholstery when she saw two figures wrapped up as one. Engrossed in each other, they did not see the tall, skinny girl who dashed back across the street to the store.

The next day Sachie handed in two compositions and four poems. Her grades went up in English again, and she refused to take any notes to the office for Mr. Honda.

"I come to school to learn, not to be a school monitor," she said, when asked to take a note to the office. "I took my share of notes to the office. Ask someone else."

She knew Mr. Honda was puzzled by her change of attitude but she didn't care. She hated him.

But then one day Jerry Higa pulled her pigtails as she was walking out of the room, and gave her some pumpkin seeds. She forgave Mr. Honda, but science was never again her favorite subject.

One day Sachie decided to run away. Definitely. Because her mother was going to give her moxa.

First her mother would have Toki and Haruo catch her. Then they would hold her down on a mat. Her mother would bare Sachie's back. Haruo would place the moxa on the spot indicated, and her mother would apply the burning punk to the moxa. The moxa burned the skin, and sometimes the burned spot festered.

The moxa or **yaito** would cure her, her mother said. Moxa, like worm medicine, could cure practically anything. Of course it had to be applied to the right spot, and this was the secret that made moxa useless except to those who knew the right spots. Her mother, Sachie was sure, did not know the right spots because Sachie's faults weren't cured.

Sachie was to get the moxa because of the bath fire. On Tuesday, she had been going to start the bath fire when she happened to open a library book. Before she knew it, she had forgotten everything except the book she was reading. When she suddenly heard voices, she saw her father already on his way home from the fields.

"The bath water!"

Hurriedly she ran to start the fire. She threw in newspapers, then some twigs, and finally some chopped logs. To make sure the fire would start, she poured kerosene over the whole thing and lit the match. The result was a bright "bamm" that singed her hair and eyebrows. She fell back yelling.

Her mother said that night that Sachie must get moxa, not for forgetting to start the fire, but for taking such chances as she did.

"If you had burned yourself, the whole family would have suffered. When you act, you must consider what might happen to others too. Remember, you had the opportunity to make a choice. You could have said, 'Father, I'm sorry. I forgot to light the bath fire. You'll have to wait for your bath.'

"And you could have started the fire the usual way. Or, of course, you could do what you did tonight . . . use too much kerosene, when we've told you again and again never to do that.

"Did you think of your choices? The moxa is to remind you that in life you have many choices." So the moxa was to cure her of thoughtlessness. What was the right spot for that?

Sachie was hurt, more than angry. Not once had her mother said, "Were you badly burned? Oh, your poor hair, your eyebrows. Why, you could have been blinded. We were very lucky that nothing serious happened."

She would run away. Choices! Her mother talked of choices! She had the choice of staying at home and talking to her parents about her feelings, or of running away to let them know how she felt. She selected running away because it was more dramatic. They should have been more concerned, she thought.

She selected Toki to confide in. "Toki, I'm running away."

"You're kind of old for that, aren't you? Or kind of young?"

"I'm serious."

"Why? Why are you running away?"

"Because nobody cared whether I got burned or not."

"Of course we cared, but anyone could see you weren't burned, except for some of your hair. You didn't want us to make a big thing about that, did you?"

"Instead of feeling sorry for me, Mother wants to punish me. She said she's going to give me moxa on Sunday."

"Why don't you talk to her? Tell her how you feel?"

"No. I'd rather run away."

"Well, I guess it'll serve Mother right," Toki said. "With you gone . . . maybe forever . . . she'll have to start the bath fire. She'll have to look for the eggs, and no one is as clever as you in finding those nests. Maybe Chiseko can help her by feeding the pig and going to the Gouveias for the bread."

"That's another thing. I don't like the way Mother makes Chiseko work in the fields."

"Oh, wait a minute there. Mother doesn't ask that Chiseko work in the fields. Chiseko is the one who insists."

"I can't believe that. Who'd want to work in the fields?"

"Chiseko does. She wants to get out in the sun, breathe fresh air, get some exercise."

"But she's so pale, so thin. . ."

"I know . . . Sachie, can you keep a secret?"

"Of course I can." Even as she said that, she felt she couldn't. She was not one to keep secrets, although she tried.

"I think you're grown up, or almost grown up, anyway, and can keep a secret. You can decide what you can say to others, and what you can't. So I'm going to tell you a secret. It's about Chiseko. A few years ago she had tuberculosis and spent some time in a hospital in Honolulu. The family told others she was in school there, which she was, because the hospital has a school. She's O.K. now, but she still has to take things easy. You can see she's eating well, getting tanned, and following me around the fields like a little puppy."

So that was why Chiseko-nesan had silk clothes and blankets. Her parents must have been sorry for her. And that was why they wanted her to marry a boy outside of Hilo, someone who didn't know she had been in a hospital. What had happened to the middleman, the go-between? Wasn't he supposed to have investigated for **kusare, chorinbo,** and the like? But maybe it had never crossed her mother's mind to ask for TB. Well, well, well. . .

"Does mother know?"

"Of course. She knew even before we were married. Mother's sharp. She wanted to know why Chiseko was so pale."

"But mother used to say. . ."

"What she says and what she does are two different things. You can see how she loves Chiseko. Maybe she loves Chiseko more because

she had TB and needs love and patience to get really healthy again . . . in mind and in body . . ."

"Maybe she remembers Yoshio. How he didn't have anyone to really care for him when he had tuberculosis. In Japan."

Toki stared at her. "You know about Yoshio? Our brother? We don't usually talk about him, because you know how people are about TB. Father thought it might hurt you and Hanako when it came time for you to marry."

"Does TB run in the family?"

"Not really. You can catch it, yes, if you come in contact with someone with TB every day. But they have drugs now. In twenty years or so, we may not even have TB in the islands. But for now, you know how prejudiced old people are, and Father wants to protect you and Hanako as much as possible."

So Sachie could keep a secret, after all. "I don't always go blabbing to my friends . . . although of course I usually do," she admitted.

"Well, don't tell Chiseko I told you, OK? She doesn't want anyone pampering her. Oh, I forgot. You'll be running away. You may even run away to Honolulu."

Sachie had forgotten about that. "Well, listen, do you know where the moxa is?"

"Sure, it's on the shelf below the Shinto shrine. Must be pretty old by now. Haven't used it for so long."

"Could you hide it?"

"I'll do better than that. I'll throw it away. It wouldn't do any good anyway. Not to you."

When Sunday came, her mother had forgotten, evidently, about the moxa, for she didn't search for it. And Sachie, in the weeks that followed, washed the dishes, cleaned the kitchen, fed the pig and did chores that belonged to Chiseko, all so cheerfully that finally her mother was puzzled.

"Something's wrong with Sachie. She's too thoughtful and well-behaved. Perhaps I should give her some worm medicine."

But she passed a cup of tea to Sachie as she said that.

CHAPTER 9

MAY: HARUO GOES TO HEAVEN, OR IS IT HONOLULU?

"In Kakela, the Japanese families become one big family when misfortune strikes. Is this true everywhere?"

That Sunday was warm, for a May. In the garden, the azaleas and gladiolas were in bloom — white, pink, salmon and lavender — as they did almost all year round in Hawaii. The pansies stared with innocent faces. The fuschias hung their miniature magenta lanterns. The asters made low patches of green and white. There was a heavy, sleepy fragrance in the air.

On the porch, Pushi stretched lazily. She measured Blackie for a moment, then sheathed her claws into soft, defenseless paws and went back to sleep. Blackie, too, flicked an ear and closed his eyes.

Under the avocado tree in the front yard, the chickens snoozed in utter abandon, head under wing, defenseless. The eucalyptus trees languished in lazy contentment.

Sachie's father sat reading a worn magazine while her mother sewed a patch on the knee of Haruo's trousers. Both Haruo and Toki had gone to gather abalone at Keawe, the rocky cliffs below Fraserville, and Sachie had just returned from Sunday's Japanese school. Chiseko-san had gone to Hilo to visit her folks, and Hanako was in school there.

A car drove up the hill, stirring the dust and rattling the stones. The chickens scattered. Blackie bounded down the steps. Pushi retreated into the kitchen.

It was Itoga-san, in his work clothes. He ran to the porch, then stood there breathless, speechless, motionless.

"Come in, come in, Itoga-san," her father invited, hurrying down the steps to greet him while her mother put the basket of sewing away.

Itoga-san stood there, his mouth open. Finally her father said, "Is something wrong? Is someone ill in your family, Itoga-san?"

"No . . . no . . ." Itoga-san said, dropping his head.

"Then what is it? Tell us. Tell us quickly. We'll do anything to help you."

Still Itoga-san stood there. The tears began running down his cheeks, but no sound came from his lips.

"Mother, some tea for Itoga-san. Hurry!"

At that, Itoga-san came to life. "No. No tea, please. It is . . . it is . . . Haruo-san. Something has happened to him."

"Haruo? Our Haruo? An accident? Is he hurt? Is he hurt badly? Itoga-san, quickly, tell us what you know."

"No . . . no . . . he wasn't hurt badly . . ."

"Thank God. Thank Heaven . . ."

"It was the ocean. A big wave came and he . . . the wave took him. He was on the cliff with Toki, and the wave came, and . . . they just found the body . . ."

"The body? The body! Then that means . . ." For the first time her mother spoke. "The body . . . Haruo . . ." Slowly she turned and went to the Buddhist altar in the living room. She lighted candles and incense and stared at the figure of the goddess Kwannon.

"Kwannon . . . you are the goddess of mercy . . . I pray to you every morning and every night. Why do you punish me like this?"

She found Haruo's work shoes, still caked with mud, and cradled them in her arms.

"First Yoshio, my first born, and now Haruo . . . what did I do wrong in another life?" She wept. Never before had she raised her voice in anguished weeping. Always before, she had gone into the garden and dug the ground until she was exhausted, and her anger or her hurt was diminished.

On the parch, Sachie's father sat down again without a word to Itoga-san. His eyes stared at the land before him, at the Pacific Ocean that lay between him and his beloved Japan, at the fruit trees planted for his sons and his sons' sons.

"Was it worth it?" he asked. "For this land, for this freedom and plenty that we have, was it worth coming? I made mother come, leaving her child in Japan. I killed Yoshio, my eldest, for if I had not sent for him, he would still be alive. Day after day, Mother has had to work in the fields, without relatives to visit, without a temple to pray in, without a new kimono these past 30 years. And all because of me . . . because I was too proud to live with my brother and eat his rice, which I had helped raise and which was therefore as much mine as his."

He stared at the land, but the tears would not come, for if they came, they would be for himself, and not for his beloved Haruo. Haruo, who towered over them. Haruo, who was so gentle. Haruo who had been saving every penny so that he could go to Honolulu and enter college some day. Haruo! Why Haruo, when he was so full of life? Why not he, the father, when he had lived over 70 years and would willingly have given his life in exchange for Haruo's?

It was good that the Japanese families in Kakela became one extended family when misfortune fell. Sachie's father and mother were useless. They would greet each new person who came to pay his respects, remember something about Haruo, and become numb all over again. So the Kakela family took over, the Kakela family which consisted of all of the Japanese families there.

Beginning that night and early the next day, the menfolk came to make paper flowers, lanterns and other decorations for the grave. Shimoda-san made a wooden marker. Then he began carving a small tablet which would carry Haruo's posthumous name . . . the name he would be known by in Heaven. The tablet would be placed in the altar; the marker would go on his grave.

The womenfolk cooked. Many brought vegetables from their own farms with which to feed the crowd that came. Others went into the Himeno fields to gather beans, carrots, cabbage, cucumbers. At a funeral, there was strict **shojin**; no meat, fish, poultry or even eggs could be used.

Itoga-san and Togo-san, being the nearest neighbors, sat on the porch and collected donations that friends and relatives brought. They noted in **katakana**, the simplest form of Japanese writing, these contributions in a book. After all, when a neighbor or friend died, the Himeno family would be guided by the money received today, and they would donate accordingly to that family. This was the way it had been done for generations, and this was a guide for future generations.

Sachie sat in the living room with her parents. Her knees hurt, sitting on them hours at a time. She was ashamed of herself. Here her brother was, in a coffin, and she was thinking of the pins and needles in her own knees. She wept because she was so selfish, thinking only of her own comfort and not of Haruo. How heartless she was. She wept even more when people patted her, because she felt so guilty. Haruo, forgive me, she asked.

To make it worse, there was no dignity in death. The anger Sachie felt dried her tears. Why did people have to flaunt their authority even at a funeral?

Shimoda-san, the priest's relative, was in official charge of the funeral, and his usual loud voice could be heard everywhere, beginning from the time the coffin was brought in.

"The head has to face the north," he commanded. The men obeyed. The head of the coffin went north.

"No, no, no, not that way," he scolded. "The head has to face the north."

"But this is north. That's east, so this is north."

"The head has to be up here, not down there. That way, he won't be facing north should he sit up."

Sachie had never heard such reasoning before, but she couldn't even laugh.

The men looked at each other but dutifully did as they were told, and Sachie's parents squirmed in embarrassment and anger. Sachie herself used this time to straighten her legs and quietly exercise her toes to bring back some blood circulation.

Then, when her mother said she wanted to put Haruo's work shoes

in the coffin, Shimoda-san said, "No, no, no. His dress shoes, maybe, but not his work shoes. How can he go to Heaven in his dirty old work shoes? The gods would never allow that."

Her mother, however, was not like the strong young men who had brought in the coffin. She remembered the joy with which Haruo had bought these sturdy work shoes which he also used for hiking in the mountains to catch the wild pigs. "I want those shoes in with him." Her father agreed.

In the end, Shimoda-san, mumbling and grumbling, gave in, shaking his head and saying that in Japan this would never be allowed. How ignorant these farmers of Kakela were! But what could one expect from such 'country jack' people?

His voice carried from the kitchen, the yard, the garage. The death of Haruo was secondary to him. The work shoes, although hidden by the clean white **kimono** the family had sewed for Haruo, was his primary concern. Or, maybe, the fact that a small grey woman had overridden his order and won, in front of all these people.

"I'm not needed around here," he fumed. But he stayed.

At the service over the body, the priest read the sutra, beginning with the words that were so familiar to Sachie. She remembered the many nights Haruo had sat next to her, chanting the same words. Their evening prayers had always brought them close, no matter how angry they had been with each other during the day. And now Haruo, who had seemed to cement them together in a special way, was gone.

After the burial at Fraserville the next day, close friends came back to the house to help in putting things away and in keeping the Himenos company. Mr. and Mrs. Itoga came, and Ayako, Shigeo and Arlene. Ayako was quiet, except for once, when she told her mother, "Mother, I'm going away to college." Togo-san came, and Muraki-san, poor Muraki-san. They all prayed again, and as they raised their voices in unison in the **kimyo muryo jinnyorai**, while the eucalyptus trees comforted each other softly, Sachie thought, "How lucky we are to have such a family of families. These people are not even relatives, yet they take a few days off to come and help us and to comfort us. Do Americans have this custom too, or is it only the Japanese? How fortunate I am in being Japanese."

At 3 a.m. that morning Sachie woke with a start, although the house was quiet. There was only the steady ticking of the clock on the table.

Something, however, had awakened her.

Then she realized Haruo was dead. She had listened to Toki and Haruo plan his going away to Honolulu so many times that his leaving had been no surprise. Haruo had really left for Honolulu to enter the University there, she had said to herself earlier. He would return in a few years, to help the Japanese in Kakela and Fraserville diversify their crops, whatever that meant, and form a cooperative. So he wasn't really dead.

But at 3 a.m. she knew he was gone forever. His big dream had been crumpled and tossed into the ocean, to float for a while and finally to merge with the blue-green water. Haruo's life was only a dream. It had been a good dream, a long dream, but still it had been only a dream. The memory of it would fade away. Big, friendly, thoughtful, energetic Haruo would fade away from their lives. It would be as if he had never existed, just as Yoshio, the oldest son who had died in Japan, had never existed for Sachie until a few months ago. Was this what life was, only a string of dreams, of memories?

Sachie's tears flowed silently into her pillow. How could Haruo be a dream, he of all people, he who had affected so many others? She wept, and her nose clogged with her tears. But rather than blow it and wake people up, she breathed through her mouth.

Suddenly, someone, somewhere in the house, blew his nose. He, too, must have had a clogged nose from weeping. It must have been that weeping, silent though it was, that had awakened her. Her father . . . surely it was her father . . . for he would never cry in front of people.

Haruo was gone, but her father was alive and needed someone to love. Love me, Sachie commanded her father in the dark silence. Love me, because I love you too. Love me and let me take the place of Haruo. I cannot tell you I love you in words, in English or in Japanese, because we never seem to say such things. We only show our love in our actions. Haruo, tell Mother and Father I love them. Tell them right now.

In her intensity to send this message, Sachie forgot to breathe through her mouth and blew her nose. The silence in the house was even deeper. The tick-tock of the small clock boomeranged against the walls of the room to tell them that time was passing by, that life is only a dream for everyone anyway.

On the seventh day after the funeral, the priest recited:

"Sore ningen no fusho naru so wo, tsura tsura kanzuru ni oyoso

hakanaki mono wa, kono yo no shi-chiu-ju maboroshi no goto-kunaru ichigo nari . . ."

"Life is only a dream," the priest interpreted. "From beginning to end, it is unreal, fleeting. A lifetime passes soon. You go or I go first, and we don't know when that will be. This is fate . . . all we know is that we cannot know the future. That is why we pray for God's love with our prayer **Namu amida butsu** daily, so that God can be our strength in our weakness and in our uncertainty."

So what I thought of was true, Sachie realized. Life is really only a dream. Some man, many years ago, thought so too.

On the 35th day after Haruo died, her mother said, "Come, we must all go and pay our respects to the ocean that took your brother."

"No," Toki protested. "I can't go to that place again."

But her mother cut some flowers from the garden, gathered incense and candles, and took Haruo's harmonica from a special drawer. Toki finally drove Sachie, Chiseko, and his mother down the dusty, curving road. Her father refused to go.

It was a beautiful place, and Sachie could not imagine how anyone could die at such a spot. Sheer precipitous cliffs rose up and up, almost touching the sky in their limitless height. One cliff wall showed every shade of green, from the olive yellow of the **kukui** trees to the velvety black in the crags where the light could not penetrate. The other wall was golden. The low afternoon sun cast a warm glow over all the trees, and the tiny leaves of the trees twinkled like so many golden bells, as if to sing out their innocence of any wrongdoing. The ocean before them was green and turquoise blue and purple; it was calm and innocent. But on the cliffs to one side, where the **opihi** and other edibles clung, the waves dashed in frustration, churning the water angrily in a million evanescent bubbles, bubbles that were real, that existed for one brief moment, then vanished forever. Sometimes the lower portions of the cliffs lay bare, as the waves receded, and the teeming sea life clinging to the walls lay exposed, vulnerable.

It was to these cliffs, to this angry portion of the sea, that they had come to pay homage.

"Here, take this," her mother said, throwing Haruo's prized harmonica into the water. "And don't you take anyone's life here again. Be satisfied with him. For we loved him so much, and you have taken him away from us."

When they reached home, her father was playing his flute. It was the piece called The Dawn Wanderer:

"And he wandered, in the fresh and spotless dawn
To the rustling of the bamboo and the swishing of the pine
And the path was narrow, though the sky was side and endless
And he wandered, searching, searching, for his destiny he must find."

Sachie could almost hear the bamboo, as they rustled their dry, prickly narrow leaves. The dark green pine would swish like silk tassels of the sugar cane on a dry, windy day. The dew on the grass lining the path would cling to the wanderer, but the traveler, intent on the road before him, would be unaware of the wetness or of the beauty around him. He must go on. He had a destiny. But what was his destiny? Was the destiny more important than the path with its diamond-studded grass glittering in the early morning sunshine? Was an eternity more important than a moment?

When she left, she saw her father put his head in his hands, but a moment later he took his flute and played a tune that they had all loved and listened to at least once a week during her lifetime.

Late that night, the family gathered to pray as usual. While chanting, Sachie noticed two sets of portions of food in the altar. One was for Haruo. For whom was the other? Was it Yoshio's birthday? It wasn't Toki's or Hanako's.

Then she remembered. Why, today was her birthday! She had been waiting and waiting for this day when she would be 14, and she had forgotten! Because this was the 35th day after Haruo's death, and a special day according to Buddhist traditions, the family had been receiving friends till late afternoon. Then they had gone to the ocean where Haruo had drowned. She had been too busy to even remember.

But her mother, surely busier than Sachie, had remembered.

Sachie reached over to give her mother's knee a squeeze, and her mother gave her a loving smile. But quickly she disguised it into one of sternness, perhaps realizing that the gods could be watching.

CHAPTER 10

JUNE: AYAKO LEARNS TO BE PROUD OF HER BLUE-GREY EYES

"Ashamed OF you? Never! Ashamed FOR you. There's a difference."

Two exciting events took place in Kakela that June for Sachie. One was expected; the other was not.

The unexpected one was such a surprise, even Sachie's father could hardly believe it. Sachie must be mistaken. It wasn't Mrs. Akina who would be getting married. It must be Roselani, coming back from Honolulu. After all, Jimmy Sausage had been courting her for a long time.

"No, it's Mrs. Akina. Abel said it was his mother. He said she invited us to come to the **luau** they are having next Saturday."

It had never occurred to people in Kakela or Fraserville that Mrs.

Akina and Jimmy Sausage might marry. After all, he had had eyes only for Roselani. He had kept taking sausages to the Akina family even after Roselani had left for Honolulu. What happened, no one knew. Only Jimmy and Mrs. Akina.

And then they got married. On Saturday, the pig wrapped in **ti** leaf, was steamed in the underground **imu**, together with sweet potatoes, bunches and bunches and bunches of bananas, a pile of breadfruit, and some special greens. There was **poi, lomilomi** salmon, coconut pudding, and chicken-long rice. There was singing, feasting, dancing. Everyone had a good time. Then Mrs. Akina and Jimmy Sausage went on a long honeymoon to Honolulu and the Mainland United States.

When they came back, they were Mr. and Mrs. Trumbull, not Mrs. Akina and Jimmy Sausage anymore. Somehow there was a difference. Jimmy didn't look quite so insignificant, and his long nose seemed shorter. As for Mrs. Trumbull, she seemed younger and prettier, and some of the men wondered why they hadn't gone courting her themselves.

For the first time, people envied Jimmy Trumbull and felt sorry for handsome Solomon Kealoha, even though he looked like a movie star.

Solomon was kind, but he was lazy. He seldom paid his debts, yet he would give the shirt off his back if someone needed it. He couldn't keep a job long, but if someone needed help in cleaning his yard or fixing a roof, Solomon rounded up some men and was the first one there. People didn't know whether to love or avoid Solomon. It didn't matter. Solomon liked all the people and treated them like brothers . . . sharing and caring.

Everyone had expected Roselani to marry Solomon . . . tall, handsome, bronze Solomon. How could anyone resist him and his smile? He could sing, strum the ukulele and pluck his guitar strings in a special, magical way.

But then Roselani had had a chance to dance in a hula troupe and left for Honolulu. At loose ends, Solomon met a **haole** girl from Honolulu who had come to visit the plantation boss and who invited Solomon to the plantation boss' house. After that, he seldom came to Kakela and even to Fraserville. When he did come, he drove a long, black Buick and would wave, "Hi, bruddah!" but the **haole** girl at his side would nudge him to hurry. He would have to drive back to the plantation boss' house before he could even get a drink at Martin's bar with his friends.

Well, the people said, Solomon might marry a white girl after all. Many Hawaiian men married white girls, just as many white men married Hawaiian girls. And since the white girl seemed to have lots of money, Solomon was a good choice. Handsome, a good entertainer, kind, easy to get along with . . . what more would a girl with lots of money need?

Then suddenly Solomon returned to Fraserville, without the big black Buick, without the white girl. He didn't have any money, although he had a diamond ring on his finger and a gold wristwatch. The owner of Martin's bar didn't want to give him credit, and he had to turn in his ring for money. People began saying, "Poor Solomon. All he has is looks, and looks don't last long."

The very next week, however, before people could enjoy feeling sorry for Solomon, the plantation boss' wife from another plantation came into town in a big black Cadillac and asked for Solomon. She needed a chauffeur, she said. She had a double chin, many rings on her fingers, and lots of rouge on her cheeks. She carried Solomon off, although he didn't want to go.

In a few days Solomon was back, driving the big black Cadillac. He treated everyone in the bar, even the owner who had refused him credit only a few weeks back, with cash.

A few months later, people noticed a strange thing. Jimmy and Mrs. Trumbull started to look alike. Jimmy grew plumper, like Mrs. Trumbull. And Mrs. Trumbull grew thinner, like Jimmy. They both wore the same contented look on their faces. And when Solomon drove into town, people noticed he started looking like the plantation boss' wife, even to the double chin on his tanned handsome face and the many rings on his fingers on both hands.

"Poor Solomon," people said. "Now he doesn't look too much like a movie star."

The second exciting event that June was Ayako Itoga's graduation from high school.

It was the first time a Japanese girl from Kakela would be graduating from high school. Always before, the girls had dropped out after 10th grade to work or to get married.

But Ayako refused to get married.

In many Kakela homes, they discussed Ayako almost as if she were their own daughter.

"See? It was a mistake sending her through high school. Now it's college she wants."

At the Itoga home, Mrs. Itoga said to Ayako, for the hundredth time, "It's out of the question."

"I'm going. I have to go. Whether you allow me to or not. Shigeo says he'll work twice as hard while I'm away."

"But how can we afford to send you through college? We're not rich. We don't have any money."

"All I need is enough to go to Honolulu. Cost by steerage is not much. Miss Case found a place for me to live. A professor, his wife, and three children need someone to help with the dishes and to stay with the children at night."

"A maid! Mother, she wants to be a maid!"

"Miss Case worked as a maid while going through college. Lots of girls do that, because it means they can have free housing and breakfast and dinner. They can even take sandwiches for lunch."

"Mother, tell her what happens to maids!"

"What happens to maids?" Mrs. Itoga demanded. "Times are different, Father. My reason why she shouldn't go to college is, who on this island would marry a college graduate? How many Japanese male college graduates are around? And if she marries on Oahu, in Honolulu, we will never get to see her."

"A maid! Impossible!"

"Times are different, Father," Mrs. Itoga repeated. "Also, Honolulu is different from the plantation."

"Different? There is no difference. There is no difference in men living in Honolulu and on the plantations, 20 years ago or today. Get a single girl in the house, especially someone as pretty a girl as Ayako, and sooner or later they act the same."

"This is a professor, Father. . ."

"A professor is still a man, Ayako."

"Are you saying all men are alike? Including you?"

"I'm saying that when there is an opportunity. . ."

"Our case was different, Father, and you know it!" Mrs. Itoga said, almost angrily.

"Oh, so now it's my fault, what happened to us?"

"I didn't say it was your fault. Or my fault. I said our case was dif-

ferent. And I did things by choice."

"But it's my fault because I forced you, in a way, to make the choice you did?"

"Still, I was the one making the choice," Mrs. Itoga said. "Ayako, you are old enough to know the whole story of why you have blue-grey eyes, why you are half-white. Let me explain how it happened."

"You don't need to, Mother."

"I want to, Ayako. You know your father and I were married in Japan. Your father came first, because we weren't sure we would want to live in Hawaii. I was to come when he had saved enough money for my passage. To save money, your father didn't eat good food or buy warm clothes. After working all day on the plantation, he would go into the mountains to get firewood just so he could make extra money. Sundays, he washed and ironed for other men who sat and gambled. And when I finally came, we found he had TB. He had TB, this hard-working man, and the men who played and gambled, they had no money and no wives but at least they had no TB.

"The plantation wanted to send us back to Japan, but they didn't want to pay our way because your father hadn't worked his full three years. We didn't have any money to go home on our own. The Japanese men at the camp were kind, but they didn't want your father in their camp because they didn't want to catch TB. I wasn't strong enough to work on the plantation and earn enough to support your father and myself.

"Then one day a **luna** came to tell us we had to leave the plantation. We didn't know where to go, but we had to start packing. Then, two days later, the **luna** came back to tell us that he had spoken to his wife, and she had said she needed a maid. There was an empty cottage behind his house that we could live in. Ayako, you don't know, you can't possibly know, how grateful, how happy we were.

"Also, the missus was so good to us. She taught me to speak some English. She called me her little doll.

"But one day, when the missus was away, the **luna** called me to his room," Mrs. Itoga continued. "I thought I had done something wrong. But then I found out what he wanted. I said no, that I couldn't do that. I came back to the house to tell your father that we would have to leave, after all. I saw him sleeping. He had color in his cheeks, and he was gaining weight. He was getting rest in a quiet place, medicine from the

hospital, and good food, for the missus always made me make more than they needed and told me to take the left-overs home. If we left that home, where could we go? What would happen to your father?

"I stayed, and when you were born, I wanted to kill myself because you had blue eyes, and I knew you would have a hard life ahead of you."

"I wanted to kill myself too," Mr. Itoga interrupted. "Each day, I would say, today I am going to kill myself. But when I saw your mother bringing me soup or eggs from the kitchen, I knew I couldn't kill myself. For then your mother's sacrifice would be for nothing. I couldn't kill myself, but do you know how I felt? A man is supposed to support and protect his wife, yet here I was making my wife support and protect me."

He poured himself a drink of **sake**. "No, instead of killing myself, I lived each day ashamed for you."

"Is that why you drink **sake**?" Ayako asked. "Because you're ashamed of me? Well, I'm not ashamed of myself. I don't care that I'm half-white. I study harder. I work harder. That's why I was offered a university scholarship. That's why I'm going to be valedictorian at the graduation exercises next week. You may be ashamed of me, but I'm not ashamed of myself."

"Ayako, Ayako," her father said, "don't misunderstand. Ashamed of you? Never! Ashamed for you. There's a difference. I'm ashamed I'm not your real father. I'm ashamed I had to depend on your mother for survival, after all the plans I had, all the dreams I dreamed. But I'm not ashamed of you, Ayako. No, I'm so proud of you. When I heard you were going to speak to the whole community at graduation, I was so proud. No, Ayako, I'm ashamed for you but not of you."

"I don't see why you have to be ashamed, father. You say you are ashamed because mother had to support you when you were ill. What's wrong with that? Wouldn't you have supported mother if she had been unable to cook or clean the house or work in the fields?"

"Of course. But that's a man's job, to support his wife."

"A man's job. According to tradition, yes. But what if the man is unable to do so for one reason or another? Isn't love and helping one another when one is ill stronger than any tradition? That's what mother did, in whatever way she could."

"Ayako, Ayako, what are you saying? Father, don't listen to her," Ayako's mother protested.

"No, Mother, let me finish. Father is saddled with guilt and he's been carrying this guilt too long. Father, how many nights have you made mother get up from her bed because you had this guilt and you had to drink **yakesake**? Mother had worked all day and she needed her rest, but your guilt was stronger than your consideration for her. You made her get up from a warm bed to comfort you. Are you saying you are a strong man, making her do that?"

"Ayako, stop!"

"Let me finish. Father has had this guilt complex for too long. He thinks people are laughing at him, when people accepted the fact that Shigeo and I are **happa-haole** long, long ago. By this time they could care less. So why is Father still carrying his guilt and pampering himself? Why is he living in the past? Father, take this guilt burden off your back and my back and Shigeo's back and make your next 18 years more productive ones. Appreciate what mother did for you in the only way she could.

"And father, please tell me you want me to go to college, since I have to go anyway. Tell me to carry on with your plans, your dreams. Let's make your early dreams a family affair."

The day before graduation Sachie picked 200 white carnations and sat down to string them into a triple carnation lei. The lei would be for Ayako, for Haruo had planted the carnations for his mother, but it also had been for Ayako who someday might have lived in the Himeno home had Haruo lived.

After stringing the carnation lei, Sachie started on a pansy lei. The pansy lei was for Miss Case, the English teacher, who had been at Fraserville for three years and was now being transferred to Honolulu. Being assigned to a Honolulu school was every teacher's goal.

Sachie smiled, thinking of her many tussles with Miss Case in the one year she had had her for English.

Once Miss Case had wanted her to sit next to Chiyo, who had lice crawling over her black hair. Sachie refused to move.

"I'm going to have to send you to the principal," Miss Case warned. The threat did no good. Better to be sent to the principal than to have lice and have one's head doused with kerosene.

"Why don't you obey me?" Miss Case asked. Sachie couldn't say, "Chiyo has lice," even though everyone in the classroom, including

Chiyo, knew it. By putting it into words, she would make Chiyo lose face. So Sachie was silent and sent to the principal's office with a note.

The principal, who knew Sachie as his daughter's friend but better as the girl who had spilled smelly cod liver oil on his suit one day, read the note.

"Now, what's the matter?" he asked. "Miss Case says you don't want to share a seat with another girl. Don't you know we don't have enough seats, and we have to share where we can?"

"Not just another girl. Chiyo!"

"What's wrong with Chiyo?"

"She has lice. Her mother should use this special kind of comb my mother used when I caught lice from her before. The teeth of the comb is so close together, it draws out the lice. Then her mother has to wash Chiyo's head with kerosene. But she has to wash more than once, because the nits hatch, and then there's lice all over again. . ."

Mr. Higgins turned pink. "Did you tell Miss Case why you didn't want to change seats?"

"In front of everybody? You think I want to make Chiyo feel shame?"

Mr. Higgins wrote a note and gave it to Sachie to give to Miss Case. Since it wasn't in an envelope and sealed, it couldn't be very private. Sachie sneaked a quick look. All it said was "Lice. Health Room."

Another confrontation Sachie had had with Miss Case was when she was sitting next to Rose. Rose had a habit of reading her words out loud when she concentrated. "Adjective, adverb, participle, gerund . . .", she mumbled.

One day Miss Case, correcting papers, said, "I'm giving you free time today to review the chapter for tomorrow's test. You have lots to do, so I don't want to hear any whispering or talking. Is that clear?"

Concentration . . . Rose studied every sentence, every word, mouthing her words. Sachie read her chapter, then looked at Rose in amazement. How could Rose know what was in the chapter if she read words instead of the ideas in the combination of words and sentences?

Just then Miss Case raised her head. "Sachie, I thought I just said I didn't want any talking."

"I wasn't talking, Miss Case."

"Now you're lying, which is even worse."

"Ask Rose. Rose, was I talking to you?"

Rose turned red and lowered her head. To Miss Case, that was proof Sachie had been talking.

"Sachie, I told you I don't like people who lie. Will you please stand outside the door until you can learn courtesy for other members of the class."

The injustice, the unfairness of Miss Case not even checking with Rose, and Rose not supporting Sachie, was too much! Sachie grabbed her books, and instead of standing outside the door, walked to the cafeteria. There, the cafeteria manager, thinking her one of the student helpers, scolded, "Where's your cap? Put your cap on. Don't you know you're always to have a cap on when working in the cafeteria?"

Sachie found a cap in a corner, put it on, washed her hands, and then helped to spread butter on the bread. It wasn't real butter . . . it was peanut butter which had had milk added to it to make it thinner and to stretch it.

At first she buttered the bread angrily, but soon she began enjoying it. She had finished this job and was being assigned another, when a girl came dashing in.

"Sachie, Miss Case is looking all over for you. She even went to all the bathrooms!"

Sachie remembered. She was supposed to be standing outside the English classroom door.

"I didn't talk, and Miss Case said I did. She accused me of lying in front of everybody."

"We know. Miss Case found that out. She heard the talking even after you left so she watched us. She found it was Rose reading aloud. She said she would give Rose extra help in reading, and she apologized and began looking for you."

So after the fall came the pride. Miss Case was extra nice to her for weeks after that.

As Sachie sat stringing the pansies for Miss Case's lei, she thought of all the times Miss Case had shown interest in the Kakela children. She was different from the other teachers. Miss Roe, for instance, never got mad at anyone and never was really unfair, but she didn't care what happened to the students after school. Mr. Gobel was snobbish, and tried to associate with the white people in the big houses on the hill. Mr. Rhodes was nice, but he acted as if the Kakela children

were beggar children, just because their keds had holes or they had no shoes at all. But Miss Case, she was different.

"Go through high school, and then to college if you can," she encouraged. "With your intelligence, your alertness, it would be a shame to spend all your life working as laborers on the plantations. You can be doctors, lawyers, even representatives and senators in Congress if Hawaii ever becomes a state. I have faith in you to be leaders of your community."

"We have the ambition, but we don't have the money."

"Don't be afraid to work. You can work in cafeterias while going through school. You can be maids and yardmen. That way, you get free room and board. You can work at the pineapple cannery during summers for spending money, for tuition. You can apply for scholarships."

To those who had a hard time in learning school work, she said, "But college isn't the only important place where you learn. You can learn while you work. The important thing is that you be happy, doing the work for which you're best suited. If you're going to be a chicken farmer, be a good one. If you want to be a mechanic, be reliable, for people's lives depend on you. That's such an important job."

As Sachie strung the lei, she thought, "Funny, about this time last year, I used to think most white people didn't respect the Japanese or looked down on them. But look at Miss Case. Look at Mr. Scott, how he takes care of us. Of course there are people like Bachman, but on the other hand, we have people like Mrs. Yamada, who won't share something good that she has."

A carnation lei and a pansy lei made with hundreds of flowers and hundreds of memories . . . that was June. June was the time friends and teachers parted, the end of a school year. But June was the time those who graduated began making something of themselves. June, and not January, was the time when a new life, a new year really began.

CHAPTER 11

JULY: HOORAY FOR POOR MURAKI-SAN!

"It is hard to reach the heart of another person through a letter. Someone is writing this for me, and someone must read this for you. But I hope you will understand all I am trying to say. Be sure that if you come to Kakela, everyone will love you."

When Sachie got the invitation to Laurie Higgins' birthday party, she was relieved. After all, she had been Laurie's best friend for a long, long time but she and Laurie had almost parted not talking when school ended in June.

The misunderstanding began the middle of second semester. It started in social studies class. They had just had current events and someone had reported on the Tim Kingston case.

"He should be hanged," Laurie said. Criminals were hanged, not electrocuted or gassed, in Hawaii.

"Why? Because he wanted to save his mother's life?" Sachie challenged. "If I were in Tim Kingston's shoes and I didn't have a father and my mother was sick and no one would help me take care of her or give me money for medicine, I think I might have done the same thing."

"You'd murder a boy? An innocent six-year-old boy?"

"But the father was willing for the boy, his own son, to die. He said so. He said, 'I'd rather have the boy dead than pay the ransom.'"

"You can't go around paying ransom to kidnappers. Then you'd have more and more kidnappings."

The Kingston kidnapping had been reported in all the papers. Tim, only 17 himself, had kidnapped a six-year-old boy and demanded $5,000 ransom. "I thought sure the father would give me the money. It wasn't too much. It would buy food and medicine, and maybe I could even have my mother stay in the hospital for a while. I would have returned the money some day when I got a steady job after graduating from high school.

"The father has three cars, a big house. He wouldn't have missed that $5,000."

But the father had said he would not pay, that he would rather have the child die.

"That made me mad," Tim Kingston had said. "Better to be dead than have a father like that." A father who put principles ahead of love. Principles were good when someone else's child was kidnapped, not your own.

"This father didn't even ask the kidnapper to return his son. I read the newspapers in the library every day, hoping he would. You know, I had Bobbie locked up in a shed in the forest, and I used to sneak away to feed him twice a day. Also, I stole a blanket from someone's clothesline so Bobbie would be warm at night. My greatest worry, however, used to be the mosquitoes . . . I didn't want Bobbie bitten by mosquitoes . . ."

"You mean you worried about the mosquitoes but you didn't think twice about killing that boy?" the police said, shaking their heads in disbelief.

"I killed the boy because the father refused to give me the money. He was willing for my mother to die because I couldn't get medicine for her. I buried the boy in the blanket. But after a while I couldn't stand it,

thinking of Bobbie without a coffin. So I took the police to show them where the body was."

"Didn't you realize you'd be jailed or even hanged?"

"Yes, but I couldn't think straight. I love my mother. I'm the only one who cares about her, ever since my father deserted us when I was small and left for the Mainland. My mother worked so hard for me all these years. I had to do something for her in return.

"But now my mother has medicine. They even took her to the hospital. They say she's suffering from malnutrition. So maybe I saved one life when I took another. I don't mind dying because I know I did wrong. But I sure wish they had listened to me, all those places . . . doctors and hospitals and government agencies and markets where I went and begged for help these past months."

"Why didn't you quit school and go to work?"

"Mother begged me not to quit school. I had only a few more months before graduation, and she said graduating would affect my whole life, so to stick to school. It made her happy to see me going to school. It was the one thing that made her happy."

Questions bothered Sachie. Tim was a white boy. The picture in the newspaper showed a youth with a sensitive, gentle face. Sachie couldn't understand. How could a white man not help another white man? In Kakela, when disaster hit a family, all the other families got together and helped in whatever way they could. If there was a fire, stores donated lumber and hardware. Friends gathered together to build a new home. The farmers donated food. Even the Portuguese families sent up milk, butter and sausages. Why didn't the white families, the neighbors, help this boy and his mother? Surely they could see he was in need.

Also, Sachie had always thought people in cities lived well. Yet here was a white boy with hardly any food. The Himenos and the other families in Kakela were poor, but they always had lots of food . . . fruits and vegetables, anyway. Was her father right? Was she fortunate she had been born to a Japanese family and lived on a farm? During the Depression, anyway? Life on a farm was dull, but was it really? When every experience was real and not just a story in a book?

Sachie tried to explain to the class that she wasn't really standing up for Tim Kingston, the killer. She was standing up for Tim Kingston and

others who had to kill others or themselves in order to get attention. It was unfair. Someone should listen.

The class laughed and said she was changing her stand because she was the only one who supported Tim Kingston, a murderer. So Sachie sat down, and when the girls all trailed after Laurie, she proudly kept away from them.

Sachie didn't miss the other girls much, but she did miss Laurie. After all, they had been friends for so many years. But she wasn't going to be the one to speak first, so she borrowed library books and read and read and read.

Then, one day, she bumped accidentally into Laurie in the hallway. Her books fell, and as she and Laurie both leaned over to pick them up, they bumped heads. "Ouch," Sachie laughed.

Laurie, hearing the laughter, grabbed Sachie and said, "Sachie, let's be friends. Let's not fight, OK? Gee, I missed talking to you. You know you're my best friend." And, in front of the other girls, she hugged Sachie. Sachie did not hug her back.

So it was that when Sachie got the invitation to Laurie's birthday party in July, she was relieved. But after the happiness came the concern. What could she give for a birthday present?

Buying something was out of the question. She knew her mother didn't have any money since she had asked Sachie if she had any loose change hidden somewhere. People in Kakela always had enough to eat, since they raised their own vegetables and fruits, but cash was something else.

Of course they didn't need cash often. After all, they had a 10,000-gallon tank and a 5,000-gallon cistern for water; they had wood in the forest for the stove and the bath fire. They made their own coffee simply by going into the hills, picking the shiny red beans, drying and roasting them, and grinding them in the kitchen. They even had a tea bush in the yard. They had eggs and, almost always, milk from one or the other of the cows. Even meat, they got by going hunting for baby pigs on the slopes of Mauna Kea and raising them with slop from the kitchen.

"See how lucky we are," her father would tell Toki and the others. "When there's a Depression, then you can tell the fortunate ones from the others. When you don't have a salaried job, you have no fear of losing your job."

It was all very well to have food, but nobody had money to buy vegetables, so the Himenos were out of cash. The day of the party was coming, and Sachie was beginning to feel desperate.

Only two days before the party, the answer came. It was a box of beautifully packaged cosmetics from Hilda Harmon.

Over two months ago, when she had time on her hands because the girls in her class weren't talking to her, Sachie had cut an ad from a magazine and mailed it with twenty-five cents to an address in Hollywood.

"Most make-ups shout 'Made-up!' But Hilda Harmon would give natural-looking loveliness," the ad said. "Your skin glows, your lips are ready for enchanted moments, your eyes achieve an exotic lure. Send for free samples. Send only twenty-five cents to cover cost of packing and mailing."

The samples came in tiny but lovely jars. There was a delicate rose-colored jar for night cream, guaranteed to smooth away lines from under the eyes. There was a sky-blue jar with a cream that would soften and protect the skin at night. There was a lemon-yellow jar that held a penetrating cleanser that promised to dig deep, deep into the pores and search out hidden dirt. There was a pale green jar and a sunshine gold jar. The tiny lipstick was in a silvery case.

Sachie loved the jars in their beautiful colors . . . colors more beautiful than those in the rainbow. Even without opening them, she could smell their fragrance. Laurie would love these. Why, they would make an ideal birthday gift!

The Saturday of the party was a beautiful day — sunny yet cool. The three miles to Laurie's house was like fifty feet to a happy Sachie. Other girls were already there.

"Sachie, what did you get Laurie? I got her a book."

"I got a handkerchief with her initials on it," volunteered a girl.

"Wait till you see my gift. It's a glass ball, and when I shake it, it looks like it's snowing," another girl said.

"Mine is a surprise," Sachie answered. She felt her gift would be more beautiful than theirs.

After the games, ice cream and cake, Laurie began opening the gifts, "Oh, this is nice. I sure can use this. Oh, this is just what I've been wanting. . ." she would say as she opened each gift.

Finally it was the last gift . . . Sachie's gift. She opened it carefully and sniffed at the fragrance caught in the wrapping paper.

"Oh, look, samples!" the girls giggled. "Sachie gave Laurie samples!"

Only then did Sachie see, superimposed on the directions for application, the big red letters S A M P L E.

Her face burned. She had been looking only at the beauty of the colors, smelling the fragrance, and felling the smooth coolness of the jars. How could she have missed seeing that word? It was the first thing the others had seen.

Then Laurie said, "What beautiful colors! I'll let my mother use the contents, since she's always looking for good creams, and she'll be so happy. Then I'll use the jars for beads and pins and things. Don't they look pretty?"

She cleared space on her dresser and lined the jars against the mirror, the words hidden.

"Gee, they are pretty, at that. Sachie, where did you get these? Maybe my mom will let me buy a set too. Would we be able to get them in Fraserville?"

"No, I had to order these from Hollywood," Sachie said proudly and happily. Soon the girls were copying the address down on little scraps of paper.

Now, what makes Laurie so friendly, so considerate? Is it that she's a Caucasian? Are most Caucasians like her? Or is it because her father is a principal and her mother a teacher? Is it education that makes her considerate and friendly? We learn the same things at school . . . at least, we're in the same classes. Is she learning something else at home that we Japanese aren't learning?

Laurie was affectionate with her friends and parents. She was constantly holding hands with her friends, and she and her father openly showed love for each other. How could she, Sachie, show affection to others without feeling embarrassment?

She decided that at school she would try to be a good American. She would speak up for her rights, be heard as well as seen, be affectionate and friendly toward others.

At home she would try to be a good Japanese. She would be seen and not heard. She would show quiet respect instead of open affection. She would be responsible for her actions and responsive to others' needs.

She would pray to her own God — her Christian God — rather than to her mother's god because the Christian God seemed to be a kind and human one. Also, the Christian prayer was understandable, unlike the Sanskrit prayers they chanted every night. But she would also recognize and respect the spirits in all living things the way her mother did — in trees, in animals, even in mechanical things like the car and the sewing machine. She would not abuse any of them.

She could learn to put the two ways of living together. She could merge the two, taking the best from each. She could be both American and Japanese, an American-Japanese.

Sachie was awed by this task. How happy she was she still had the 4-mile ride home on the bus from Fraserville to Kakela, as a time to make the transition from American to Japanese. How comforting it was to be lumped by people as one of the Kakela kids, indistinguishable one from the others.

Ochini no Kusuriyasan! Ochini no kusuriyasan!

"What? Has six months gone by already?"

"I heard of your great loss," the medicine man said. "Ah, that son of yours was such a boy." He hastened to the altar in the living room to pay his respects to the dead. "God must have wanted him badly to take him so young."

After supper that night, he pulled out two photographs. "Look," he said.

"A girl! You got a girl for poor Muraki-san," Toki said.

Sachie's mother took the two pictures from the medicine man and studied them carefully. "This one, is she part Hawaiian?"

"No, she's Japanese. But she was married to a Hawaiian fisherman for more than ten years. He drowned two years ago. She has three children and wants to marry someone who will be good to the children. She's disappointed in the men in Kona, who want a good time and would marry her if she gave the children to her mother to raise. She tried working, but the children are still so young, they need a mother at home."

Her mother studied the other picture. "Now, what's wrong with this girl? She's too pretty not to have something wrong with her."

"You're right," the medicine man said. "This is Keiko-chan. To tell you the truth, she's blind."

"She's such a beatiful girl!"

"Yes. It's quite a sad story. When she was six, she had the measles, and somehow she became blind. Her parents left their house and money to their older son because he promised to take care of Keiko as long as he was alive. And he did. Until now. But he lost his wife and then remarried. His present wife grumbles about having the girl in the house. So now he wants Keiko to live elsewhere, so she won't have to listen to his new wife's complaints. He asked around to see if she could get married."

"Terrible . . . terrible . . . of that new wife to grumble. The same thing is going to happen to her someday. If she has a son, that son's wife will complain about her mother-in-law."

"Well, Keiko-chan's brother ran into trouble trying to find a husband for his sister. The men liked her beauty, but in the long run, what would they do with a blind wife? So the brother asked that I look around for some man who wouldn't mind this handicap. He asked that I look for a good man."

"Muraki-san is a good man."

As if by magic, at Muraki-san's name, Blackie barked, and Toki said, "Ah, Muraki-san has a sixth sense."

"Muraki-san, such good news," Sachie's mother called out. "The medicine man has brought two pictures."

Anxious though Muraki-san was, first he went to the altar to light a candle and incense for Haruo. Only after he had prayed did he come to see the two pictures. He gazed first at one, then at the other, and back to the first one again. Finally he asked, "What is the matter with her?"

"She's blind."

"And the other?"

"She's a widow with three children."

Muraki-san studied the pictures again. "Ah, to have children in the house. It would be heaven. I would love them as my own, and they are young enough to accept me, I think, if I love them enough. But the woman, she looks foreign, harsh, angry.

"That's because she's been mistreated so much during the last two years."

"And this one. Do you think she wouldn't mind having a homely husband like me? Such a beautiful girl?"

"She's blind. She couldn't see you," Sachie said.

"Sachie!" her father reproached. Toki pinched her. "Which girl

would you want to live with all your life and share everything you have, Muraki-san?"

"Either! I could love either. But if there's a choice, I would choose this one. I don't want you to think it's because she's so beautiful. It's just that her eyes . . you say she's blind . . . but it seems to me she can see more than the ordinary person, the way her eyes are so gentle and soft. What did you say her name was?"

"Keiko. Keiko Ohama. She can cook quite well, and even wash and clean house, as soon as she gets used to a place and the rooms are uncluttered."

"Keiko-chan. What a beautiful name. Almost like a song. Keiko-chan!"

The very next day, after the medicine man had moved on to the Itogas, Muraki-san asked Sachie's father to write him a letter. It wasn't even Sunday.

"Please, Himeno-san, I would like to have you write a letter to Keiko-chan. Please don't polish it up or take things out you think shouldn't be said yet."

"Of course, Muraki-san."

"Say, 'Dear Keiko-chan' . . . I call her Keiko-chan already . . . 'Dear Keiko-chan, today I saw your picture and I don't think I've seen a more beautiful person. I am not talking about physical beauty. It is the beauty I see in your eyes, your face, your expression. They say you are blind, that you cannot see. I do not think so. I think you see the suffering in people, the loneliness that is man's lot, the pain we must undergo together with the happiness. I think you see the good in people as well as the bad, and you can recognize those who love you.

'I am not handsome or young, but my heart is good. And I need someone to share my life with. I wish I could have children but that is up to God.

'I am not supposed to be writing to you. I am supposed to wait until we meet formally, introduced by a go-between. But I cannot wait. I want to tell you how good God is to me, to maybe bring us together, two people who need one another.

'If you marry me, I shall try to make you happy. I have some money saved, fifty acres of rich black soil where everything grows. I have wonderful neighbors who are part of my family in that we share with

one another the good and the bad. I know they will love you the way they love me and help me.

'It is hard to reach the heart of another person through a letter. Someone is writing this for me, and someone must read this for you. But I hope you will understand all I am trying to say. Be sure that if you come to Kakela, everyone will love you.

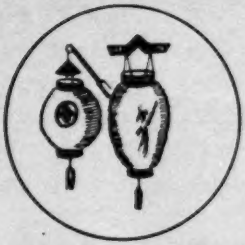
'I hope you come to Kakela and that we can make each other happy.'"

Toki said, after he had gone, "It would serve people right if Muraki-san got such a beautiful wife. They've been feeling sorry for him for so long."

But his father said, "And why shouldn't he get a beautiful wife? He's a beautiful man himself."

"No woman would be loved more. . ." his mother added.

It would be hard to wait till the answer came. And, happily, they would not need to wait for six months.



CHAPTER 12

AUGUST: THE OBI IS A SYMBOL OF LIFE

"Life is like an obi, Sachie. You can build any kind of life you choose. You can select your colors, your quality. And thread by thread, knot by knot, stitch by stitch, whatever you make of your life, your obi, is up to you. Choose wisely, Sachie . . ."

It was August, with heat waves shimmering above the road, even in Kakela. The Himenos were housecleaning again.

"Don't tell me the gods of Fortune come in August too," Sachie said, scrubbing windows all by herself. Hanako had a job in Hilo and wouldn't be back until the following evening. Haruo was gone. Chiseko-nesan was busy in the kitchen. "Didn't we clean the house like this only once last year?"

"You know it's bon season. Don't you see the dragonflies in the garden?" her mother answered.

"**Bon** already? The days go by so fast. Soon it'll be September, and I'll be in the ninth grade, then the tenth, and before you know it, I'll be in college. But how come we're cleaning the windows for **bon** season?"

"Don't you know Haruo will be coming back for a few days during **bon** season? He wants to see the windows clean."

Him too? Haruo would be the last person to care about windows, Sachie muttered under her breath. Was it only six months ago that they had cleaned the house together, and three months ago that Haruo had drowned? It all seemed so long ago.

Sachie remembered the last **bon** season. Scrubbed and clean, they had driven to the Fraserville Buddhist Church just in time for the sermon before the **bon** dance. Sachie prayed the sermon would be a short one, and her prayer was answered, for even the priest couldn't talk too long with the drummer practicing outside.

"Arlene, did you get your free towel?" Each dancer got a free towel at the **bon** dance. The towel was used to hide one's identity when dancing.

"Not yet. Let's go now before the line gets too long."

The chanters for the dance were climbing to their platform high in the center of the area in the church yard where the dance would be held. There were two chanters. The one who chanted would hold an open umbrella and a fan, ready for rain or heat. The other one sat to take over when the first one got tired. At the base of the platform stood the drum beaters. They twirled their sticks and beat the rhythm, all with fancy dance steps.

Then the dancing began. The first was the **Iwakuni Odori** . . . the dance from the Iwakuni prefecture. Graceful, stately . . . the dancers circled the platform, clapping their hands in unison to a drum beat. They moved like colorful butterflies around a giant light.

The chanter sang of old Japan — songs of filial piety, of chivalry, of bravery, of honor. And somehow, her mother explained, the songs brought back memories of windmills churning the water on the farm, of row upon row of cherry trees with petals drifting down into a pink carpet. She remembered the smell of pine trees in her early morning walk to the outer field. She chould feel the chilly wetness of the water in the rice patch as she bent to stick the rice seedlings into the mud.

For the young, **bon dori** was a rare time for flirting and meeting new people without disapproval from parents. If a boy saw an attractive girl dancing, he could cut in behind her and start a conversation.

For the very young, it was free shaved ice, all one could eat. On a hot August evening there was nothing more delicious than shaved ice with strawberry syrup on it.

Slips of paper dangled along one side of the church grounds. These contained the names of donors and the amount donated for this occasion. It was these donations that paid for the shaved ice, the free towels, the fee for the chanters and for the extra sermon.

Naturally, everyone didn't want to give too much; neither did they want to give too little. So people waited until about ten others had given their donations, then tried to give an average of these ten donors. But the church fathers were clever and asked ten very generous donors to give first. This spurred others to give either the same amount or at least more than they had intended.

Pride, after all, was the backbone of the Japanese people.

This year the **bon** season was different. After the housecleaning came the cooking. Her mother made many of the dishes Haruo used to like. Then the neighbors brought **cho-chin**, paper lanterns of various shapes that appeared only at **bon** season. Each lantern that came, her mother strung across the living room or out on the veranda.

"Your brother is lucky to have so many friends who want to light his way back to earth," Sachie's mother explained.

On **bon** night, her mother took four of the prettiest **cho-chin**, fresh flowers from the garden, candles, incense, small portions of Haruo's favorite food, and a bottle of fresh tank water. Then they drove to the cemetery, where they decorated the grave and lighted the **cho-chin**. Her father poured the water over the marker.

"**Namu amida butsu, namu amida butsu,**" they prayed, those who had loved Haruo. "**Namu amida butsu.** Haruo, are you with us tonight? Are you thinking that we have remembered you? I don't think you've come to earth for three days, as mother says. I don't believe she believes that, either. You're with us all the time. As long as we remember you, you're with us. I pretend you're in Honolulu, Haruo, because after all, I know you'd rather be in Honolulu at the university than in Heaven."

After the graveyard visit, they went to the **bon** dance. Once, as Sachie stood watching the dancers, she heard some laughter from a group of boys behind her. She thought she recognized Haruo's laughter and she turned, but it was only the others. She felt sad, unable to dance. Her parents and Toki, too, must have felt the same for

they left early, with the echo of the drum following them on their way to Kakela.

Sunday, when Sachie returned from Japanese school, her mother said, "Sachie, make us some **musubi**. Your father and I are hungry but too tired to get up." They sat on the veranda, together with Pushi and Blackie.

Sachie put her Japanese books away, changed into her home clothes, washed her hands, sprinkled salt on them and made four rice balls. In the center of each, she put a red pickled plum.

When she took them to her mother, her mother said, "Sachie, I'm proud of you. Your rice balls are triangular, as they should be." Sachie looked, and they really were triangular. She hadn't noticed.

Her parents whispered between themselves as they ate the rice-balls. Then her mother got up, washed her hands, and called Sachie into her bedroom. Opening the bottom drawer of a Japanese bureau, she took out an **obi**, a six-foot long Japanese sash that had been carefully wrapped in a sheet.

"Sachie, this is for you."

It was a long, heavy **obi**, the kind of sash one wore only with formal **kimonos**, which the Himenos did not own. Embroidered with gold and silver thread and woven of silks in soft, shimmering colors, the sash was heavy because it was lined with a stiff, strong material. It smelled of camphor, and somehow of dignity. Her mother stroked the material lovingly.

"We don't know where this **obi** came from. My grandmother said it came from her grandmother, whose grandmother was supposed to have been a lady-in-waiting at some Japanese lord's castle. Her husband — my grandmother's grandmother's grandmother's, that is — was said to be a priest and an advisor in the castle.

"We never sold this **obi**," she continued. "Even when we were starving. My mother didn't, and her mother didn't. It became a symbol for us, a symbol of the kind of life we wanted for ourselves and our children. A life with dignity and with honor."

"But mother, I don't need an **obi**. What on earth would I do with something as valuable as this?"

"Keep it and know that you have it. Look at it once in a while. Compare it with your own life, the life you are building day by day."

"But I'm only a child. I'm only 14. And anyway, you should give it to Hanako, when you do give it."

"No, Hanako will not need it. She'll lead a happy life with some man who'll love and protect her. But you, you will lead a life of many challenges. You will need a symbol of beauty, of value, of heritage to guide you when you have to make some difficult decision."

"Why are you giving it to me now? Why today? After all, I'm only a child. I can't vote, I can't date a boy, in fact I can't even spit in front of you. Why give me such a thing now? Why not wait until I'm an adult — ready to get married?"

"Because of your rice balls."

"My rice balls! What do rice balls have to do with an **obi**?"

"Well, just as this **obi** is a symbol, the rice ball is a symbol. Riceballs don't come triangular except after years of diligent practice. You have to want to make triangular rice balls in order to be able to get triangular rice balls. You laugh about the shape of the rice balls, and you don't think they're important. Yet you cared enough to make them triangular, the way they should be. And that is a sign to us, Sachie, that you do care about our culture, that you do accept our way of life. Your job now is to take the ways we have taught you, and the ways your schools have taught you, and make your own way, here in Hawaii."

"An **obi** like this for a rice ball? A triangular rice ball? Doesn't make sense."

"The **obi**, Sachie, is a symbol of life. See these gold and silver threads? Try to make loving, true friends like these strands, for friends are very precious. See how they run through the entire **obi**, not only in places that show.

"See the silk, how soft and delicate, yet so strong. Try to be like this silk — tender, sensitive, yet strong. And the lining inside — sturdy, tough. You too must be tough, together with your tenderness and sensitivity.

"Life is like an **obi**, Sachie. You can build any kind of life you choose. You can select your threads, your colors, your quality. And thread by thread, knot by knot, stitch by stitch, whatever you make of your life, your **obi**, is up to you. Choose wisely, Sachie, for you will have many choices to make, many decisions that can change your life. The experiences you have, the friends you make, the heartaches you bear,

the triumphs you gain, all these become a part of you. So choose wisely.

"Sachie, as I said. this **obi** is only a symbol, a symbol of life. From now on, you will have to grow on your own. You are now old enough to make choices — not all, but more and more of them."

Tenderly, she wrapped the folded **obi** in the sheet and replaced it in the same bureau drawer in the same position. Nothing had changed, it seemed. Yet there was a change. Sachie felt older.

Sachie and her mother rejoined her father on the veranda. The garden lay again in warm August laziness, and the lush green of Kakela rested peacefully in the afternoon sun. The Pacific Ocean was blue and green and purple, and, in the distance, she could make out the outline of Maui Island, a hazy black. Beyond, way beyond, lay Japan, her father's country, for he was not allowed to become an American citizen, even though he had spent two-thirds of his life on American soil. And beyond, way beyond, in the opposite direction, lay Sachie's country, America. But there, here in Kakela, was a land that belonged to them both, to father and daughter, to Japanese and American.

Grown-up! Making choices! I don't want to be grown up, she thought. I'm not ready. And Kakela, I always wanted to leave Kakela and go to some big city. But not right now. Not yet. Not quite yet. I want to be a child a little longer, to be the Sachie I was.

"I think I'll go hunt for some chicken eggs," she told her father.

To match wits with little chickens, not people. To watch greedy pigs, not greedy people, who wanted more and more and still more, not enjoying what was already theirs. To watch chickens scramble and fight for position in their chicken world. To watch plants scramble to get near trees with more food than they needed, as they crawled humbly at the larger trees' feet.

"Kakela, I love you for what you've given me. Father, Mother, I love you for helping me, your last daughter, grow. Forgive me for saying I wished you had been doctors or lawyers or teachers. You are such good parents.

"Mother, thank you for the **obi**. Only an honorable family could own an **obi** like that, so I will always remember that. "Honor" has to be a keyword in my life. Also, from now on I'll have to be an adult, because my parents will treat me like one . . . . . But tomorrow's tomorrow,

today's today. Chickens, beware! Here I come to see if I can outwit you and find your eggs."

Swinging her basket like a six-year-old, and waving a mischievous "watch me" to her parents, she disappeared into the coffee bushes and lehua forest.

"Sachie is a puzzle," her mother said. "Sometimes she thinks and acts like an adult. Other times, like now, she's like a little child."

"Or pretending to be one," her father said softly, a mixture of sadness and pride in his voice.

The End

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Patsy Sumie Saiki attended schools in Hawaii, Wisconsin and New York, and has taught on the junior high, high school, and college levels. More recently, she served as an administrator in the Hawaii State Department of Education's Office of Instructional Services, with responsibilities for Science and Humanities programs.

This book is an attempt to broaden our multi-cultural horizon as well as to pay tribute to the Japanese immigrants in this country.